THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

# Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE vast agonies of our time have raised in the most acute form the whole problem of the moral government of the world. It is no longer a merely speculative question to be discussed with philosophic calm, but for very many it is a life and death struggle if they are to maintain their faith in the power, wisdom, and love of God and to find peace in submission to His holy will.

'When your boy was killed was it the will of God? When the flying bomb fell on your house was it God's plan? Our thoughts about the will of God are so confused that some take refuge in fatalism, a philosophy far less satisfying than the truth. Others are bewildered and tortured in mind in an effort to harmonize the fiendish evil let loose in the world with the will of an omnipotent, loving Father.'

Any helpful discussion of this problem is timely. Accordingly we welcome a little book on *The Will of God*,[1] by the Rev. Leslie D. WEATHERHEAD, M.A., which contains five addresses given in the City Temple. These addresses are popular in form and substance, clear and readable, and full of suggestions fitted to appeal to minds in distress and perplexity that are really seeking guidance and comfort.

There is a great deal of confused and loose thinking about the will of God. The expression is often used without discrimination to cover everything that happens, a view which, if unqualified, amounts to fatalism or determinism. Especially is the will of God associated with all that is dark and sorrowful, and so a deep shadow is cast upon the face of God. To aid in getting rid of this looseness of thinking Mr. WEATHERHEAD suggests a threefold distinction between what he calls the *intentional* will of God, the *circumstantial* will of God, and the *ultimate* will of God.

The distinction thus made may be illustrated by the Cross of Christ. 'Was it God's intention from the beginning that Jesus should go to the Cross? I think the answer to that question must be No. He came with the intention that men should follow Him, not kill Him. The discipleship of men, not the death of Christ was the intentional will of God, or, if you like, His ideal purpose.' But when men's evil will came into conflict with God's loving purpose, then a situation arose in which the way of the Cross was the only way out. In these circumstances the Cross came to be the will of God, and in the Garden we see Christ accepting it as such, while shrinking from it as something alien and evil. But, more than that, through the wonderful overruling of Providence the Cross becomes the very means whereby the ultimate will of God for the world's salvation is achieved. God is able to bring good out of evil, to make the very wrath of man praise Him, and so it comes about that, not in spite of the Cross, but through the Cross, the final goal is reached.

Whatever may be thought of the terms used it is evident that some such distinctions must be kept in view if our thoughts about the will of God are not to remain in permanent confusion. First and above all we must hold that the pure will of God is a will of love, a will to bless, a will that makes for life and health and peace. As Jesus said, 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.' And it is obvious from the Gospel records that He looked upon disease and death and all the mass of human miseries as enemies to be opposed and overcome. Without doubt He taught that if God's will had free course among men, if His will were 'done in earth as it is in heaven,' all the evils which oppress mankind would be swept away.

But, as it is, God's will has to operate in a sinful world. It is crossed by the evil will of man with the most lamentable results. It is the will of God that evil must be checked. If lawlessness were allowed to run wild that would mean the end of an orderly universe. Hence arises conflict, a conflict which brings suffering not only to the guilty but also to the innocent. It brought God's own Son to the Cross and it has brought many of God's people through the valley of the shadow of death. With truth it is written: 'He doth not willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men,' but the

[1] Epworth Press: 2s. 6d. net.

circumstances of a sinful world make afflictions a dire necessity.

Yet it is not to be supposed that the foolish and evil will of man can ever prevail so far as to frustrate the wise and loving will of God. Though we may divert or hinder His purposes we can never finally defeat them. That does not mean that God, by an exertion of sheer omnipotence will bear down all opposition and get His own way, for in that case human freedom would be an illusion and moral responsibility an empty name. The omnipotence of God is not to be thought of as some irresistible physical force by the exercise of which He could in an instant stop wars and crush all evildoers, but it implies an infinitude of resource in God which is equal to every possible crisis and makes the ultimate triumph of His purpose sure.

Now it is manifest that considerations of this sort, whatever they may bring of comfort or relief of mind, do not fathom the depth of the problem. It may be said, ' You tell us that the will of God is purely good, a will which makes for life and health and peace, and you lay the blame of all the disturbance upon the evil will of man thwarting the will of God. But what of the responsibility of God who gave to man his being ? Surely the Creator is accountable for that which He has made.' In reply to this it may be said that doubtless God is responsible for man's being. The Bible never seeks to belittle God's responsibility for the world He has made. But can God be justly held responsible for the use and abuse man has made of his God-given powers ? Parents have a responsibility for bringing children into the world. They take a grave risk, it is true, but they are not held accountable for their children's evil deeds simply on the ground that they had given them birth. There was a fearful risk, doubtless, in the creation of a world of beings with free will, but, if there is any meaning in moral responsibility, man's sin cannot be charged against God on the ground that He is the Creator.

But a deeper objection may be raised against the faith that God's will is purely wise and good. Apart from all human agency fearful catastrophes occur by storm and earthquake, fire and flood. These we speak of as ' the act of God ' because no human hand is in it. Moreover it is sheer sentiment to think of God as making the flowers bloom and the sun shine while closing the eyes to the other side of Nature which to us is dark, inexorable, and hateful. Surely God is as much responsible for the latter as for the former. What can we say to that ? We must confess that here we touch unfathomable mystery. Doubtless suggestions may be made that this world, as thus constituted, is a suitable sphere for human discipline, ' a vale of Soul-making ' as the poet says. That may be true and relevant, but we must confess that, judged by our feeble minds and with the brief glimpse of it which alone is permitted us, this world is a place of infinite mystery. To the ultimate question why it pleased God to make such a world as this, there is no answer. As St. Paul says, ' O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? '

But the Apostle has also this to say, ' He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? ' In other words, the gift of God in Christ is the only adequate assurance we have that the will of God is always and only a will of love, and therefore in accordance with that will all things, even the dark and bitter things of life, are working together for our good.

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The Rev. Leonard T. Towers, M.A., Minister of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, has published a modest little expository work, consisting of four lectures given as a ' refresher course ' for teachers—*A Background to the Old Testament.*[1] The attempt is made in these pages to draw out some of the principal religious ideas of the Old Testament, and to show their relation to our life and thought.

The first lecture, on the Dawn of our Religion, touches on the question of where the Hebrews came from. It is a question on which the archaeological research of the last fifty years has thrown valuable light. The Hebrews are now identified with the Habiru. And who were the Habiru ? They were Aramaean nomads who came into Sumeria (Iraq) from the desert and were enrolled in the Sumerian army. It would appear that they were not regarded with much favour by the Sumerians, for the ideogram that refers to them means ' cut throats ' or ' brigands.'

Another point raised in this first lecture is the question of the historicity of Abraham and the patriarchs generally. Here again trust is placed in recent archaeological conclusions. If Sir Leonard Woolley has not through his discoveries at Ur found direct proof of Abraham's existence, he has at least made it reasonable to suppose that Abraham did exist, and as a historical character, not merely the eponymous hero of some wandering tribe.

[1] Independent Press ; 3s. 6d. net.

'The origin of the Hebrews goes back into remote antiquity. Almost certainly they or their ancestors once shared the polytheism and the polydaemonism of the surrounding peoples. But in the Bible we have more than a literature, more than a history, more than a collection of folk-tales; we have, under God's inscrutable Providence, the flashing beauty of that unique and priceless treasure, the story of His own self-revelation to mankind.'

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The second lecture, on the God of the Burning Bush, provides occasion for a note on Jahveh (Jehovah). We are given a wide choice on the meaning of the phrase—too wide perhaps: 'He who causes to be,' 'He who is,' 'He who will be.' 'He who is' seems to be the most likely meaning. And it would appear that the phrase is to be understood not in a metaphysical, but in a practical sense—the living and present God. Our readers may recall M. Etienne Gilson's recent handling of the phrase, and his contention that in the teaching of St. Thomas the Hebrew religious reality of 'He who is' is combined with the Greek philosophical reality of Ultimate Being.

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In this second lecture Mr. TOWERS draws attention to the development of monotheism that followed upon the Mosaic revolution in the early religion of Israel. He does well not to stress the significance of Dr. Stephen Langdon's discoveries of traces of a monotheistic faith in Babylon just after 3000 B.C., nor even of the monotheistic faith attributed to Ikhnaton in Egypt after 1400 B.C. He also does well to emphasize the fact of the strong ethical factor in Hebrew monotheism. But it may well be that until the time of the Second Isaiah the faith of Israel should be described as henotheistic rather than strictly monotheistic.

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The Great Age of Prophecy comes under review in the third lecture. The material here set forth is familiar enough to those who have learned of Dr. Skinner or Sir George Adam Smith, not to speak of Dr. T. H. Robinson. It is the last-named who has pointed out that what Jeremiah could not foresee was the *medium* by which the New Covenant was to be fulfilled. For leather or papyrus, ink would do; for clay or wax, the stylus. But for the fulfilment of the New Covenant the world had to wait until that night when, in an upper room, the Master stood up amongst His disciples and said, 'This cup is the New Covenant *in my blood*.'

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The concluding lecture is called Anticipations of the Messiah. There it is said that the hope of the nation in post-exilic Judaism revolves around two main conceptions, which may be termed Nationalism and Universalism. 'The first springs from the priestly ideal represented by Ezekiel, when nationalism became centred in the restored Temple and its ritual. The second has for its finest flower the prophetic ideal of the anonymous poet known as Deutero-Isaiah, in which conversion of all nations is envisaged through the Suffering Servant of Jahveh.'

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Our writer gives more space to the exposition of the Nationalist hope than to that of the Universalist hope. But it is the Universalist hope that is of the greater interest to the Christian student, and the questions are urgently put, What does the prophet mean by the Suffering Servant? Is he speaking of an idealized individual, of the faithful remnant of his nation, or of the nation itself?

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Here is how the answer is given in this concluding lecture: 'The author of Isa. liii. sees the principle of redemption enshrined in his nation, his broken, beaten, bleeding nation, which he personifies under the figure of God's Suffering Servant. We can hardly suppose that it was deliberately intended by him to be a picture of the Messiah. Yet it is no wonder that in these songs the material was found for the libretto of Handel's great oratorio. It is no wonder that Christendom has always seen in these words a prophecy of the Christ.'

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The volume concludes with the thought that although Christ is the culmination of the Old Testament, He is not the product of an evolutionary process, but comes not from but into human history; in Him the eternal is seen breaking into the temporal, the supernatural into the natural order.

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In a book of considerable interest, *The Interpretation of the Bible*,[1] to which a number of distinguished theologians contribute, the most arresting of the contributions is the lecture on 'The Failure of Liberalism to Interpret the Bible as the Word of God,' by Dr. T. W. MANSON, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester and Grinfield Lecturer at Oxford. It is an able presentation of the issue between Liberalism and what Dr. MANSON describes as New Testament Christianity. We should not be surprised if this essay became in its own field a classic, and certainly every working minister would find it a fortification of his faith.

[1] S.P.C.K.; 6s. net.

Dr. MANSON begins by stating the presuppositions of Liberalism. He takes these to be, first, the philosophical belief in the existence of God, the moral freedom of man and the immortality of the soul; and secondly, the universal reign of natural law and of biological evolution, to which he adds later the doctrines of biology and psychology. The effect of the belief in the universal reign of natural law has been to discredit all the miracle stories which involve, or appear to involve, interference with the order of Nature. This does not dismay the Liberal, for there is still the spiritual sphere where we can be aware of God working. There is, as it were, a plate-glass window between God and the world, and we can appear to see Him and descry signals of paternal affection.

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The introduction of the notion of evolution into the study of Biblical religion had two effects. One was to show that Christianity was an element, perhaps a climax, in a process of development, probably the best that has occurred, not an absolute or final religion. The other was to show that Christianity was part of a still larger process of the evolution of civilization. But, in reality, anything in the nature of revelation (though Liberals still use the word) may be abandoned, for what religion amounts to under the aegis of evolution is simply what gifted people have thought about duty and destiny.

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Thus, the Liberal interpretation of the Prophets is that their 'revelation consisted of an absolute and decisive conviction concerning the meaning and nature of life.' But, Dr. MANSON points out, conviction is one thing and revelation another. Every prophet knew the difference between 'Thus saith the Lord,' and 'I am convinced.' But Liberalism will not allow anything more than conviction. The plate-glass window is sound proof. The effect of all this is seen in the Liberal treatment of the gospel.

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For one thing the gospel is found (by Liberalism) in the teaching of Jesus, 'a message about God and the good.' A message *about* God, observe, not *from* God. It can be reduced to simple terms, the Kingdom of God, God as the Father, and the infinite value of the human soul. How, then, are we to construe these simple verities? As to the Kingdom of God, there is no effective control of events by God. That is excluded. All interference with Nature on God's part is barred. In short, the essential thing is that *we* should bring in the Kingdom. God is a *roi fainéant*: why bring Him in at all?

It is the same with the Fatherhood of God. That truth certainly occupied a large place in the teaching of Jesus. But, then, in Jesus' mind God is a real father, exercising a loving and providential care over His children, and a detailed and meticulous oversight over all His creatures, even to the sparrows and the wayside flowers. But that is not what Liberalism means by the Fatherhood of God. There is a steel-and-concrete order of Nature, and there is no possibility of special revelations. God must not meddle in His world by word or deed. We cannot, therefore, continue to speak of the Fatherhood of God in terms of providential care. Whether Jesus would have troubled to speak of it in the Liberal sense is not questionable.

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At this point we are confronted by the laws of biology and psychology, with something more than a suggestion that our preferences in these matters may well have something to do with glands or complexes or what not. And it is a short step to the view that the way to the good life and a better world will be a more complete knowledge and a more thorough application of these laws.

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One of Liberalism's hardest problems has been a still further and prominent fact in the New Testament, eschatology. Liberalism can do little with this. It does make play with kernel and husk, permanent and passing, to smooth out these erratic outcrops of primitive religion, but nobody can feel happy with the result. It has been left to the heirs of Liberalism to bring eschatology back on a scientific basis; and it is, of course, the eschatology of the next generation. There is no promised land for *us*; our children, thanks to biology and psychology will make their way over Jordan to the earthly paradise that awaits them. But to achieve this the State will have to intervene, and Dr. MANSON thinks that this leads directly to Totalitarianism—a curious and disturbing prediction.

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In view of all this it is surely time for us to retrace our steps. But whither? Dr. MANSON is far from being obscurantist. He does not think we can go back to Calvin, or Aquinas, or the Councils of the undivided Church, or indeed back at all. We must find the point at which Liberalism took the wrong turning, and that is when the working hypotheses of natural science were allowed to become the dogmas of theology. At that moment God's revelation of Himself gives way to man's thought about God. God's mighty acts give place to man's evolving civilization.

The doctrines of Christianity were at variance with the axioms of Liberalism. But, having adopted these axioms, there was no way of carrying the business through which did not involve picking and choosing among the Biblical material with an arbitrariness quite impossible to justify, and then imposing interpretations on what was accepted which were far from the original intention of the words. The intention was good, but the result was often grotesque. Consider Bousset's dictum, for example. He said that Christianity must be the religion of the progressive nations, and that the typical figures in a progressive nation were Goethe and Bismarck. A strange trinity—Jesus, Goethe, Bismarck—to preside over the destiny of the race!

Dr. MANSON concludes with a positive statement. 'We realize,' he says, 'that the religion of the Bible is concerned with the life of mankind in relation to the will of a living and active God. That God created the world and man; that He did so for some good purpose of His own; that He is constantly watching over the course of history; that He actively governs its development; that in Christ He has made the decisive intervention—these convictions are so fundamental to the Christian religion that to give them up is not to reform Christianity but to abandon it.'

# The New Order.

## IX. Apologetic in the New Order.

By the Reverend R. J. Wedderspoon, M.A., Pollokshields, Glasgow.

When General Montgomery, as he then was, was taking farewell in Italy of the Eighth Army that he had so long commanded, he remarked in a speech that he had had only two anxious moments during the entire campaign since Alamein. One of them had been when the Eighth Army was approaching the Mareth Line. 'Rommel attacked, and you will remember the result. It was the only time we had to fight a defensive battle since leaving Alamein, and it is interesting to note how everyone had forgotten how to fight a defensive battle. I even found generals looking up in their text-books how to fight a defensive battle.'[1]

Even the most victorious armies have, from time to time, to resort to the defensive, and, in so doing, have to employ a different technique. The reminder is a salutary one, if only for the reason that it emphasizes afresh our duty to present an up-to-date Apologetic in religion if we are fully to equip ourselves for a successful offensive. Apologetic in itself is regarded with a certain distaste by most of us, for it is always much more exciting and rewarding to present the positive content of the gospel, assured, as we are, that it possesses of itself an inner dynamic, a potency of appeal, far greater than any poor arguments of ours can ever claim. But there are certain positions which must be held and defended for a forthright and positive advance to be possible, or, at any rate, for it to secure a maximum return, and each generation must look to its Apologetic afresh. In a day when the Church is hard-pressed on many sides, it behoves those who love her to offer the very best protection they can secure.

Furthermore, there is a great opportunity at the present time. On all hands there is evidence of a widespread interest in religion, even although church-going remains out of favour with multitudes.

'It must be owned,' says Dr. W. R. Matthews, 'that the Christian churches have not shown by a marked increase in the number of their adherents any manifest signs that the current religiousness has affected them. It is singular that so many who are in quest of faith seem scarcely to consider the faith of the Church.'[2] But if all is not well in the Church, most assuredly all is not well in the camp of the enemy. Somewhat striking evidence of that is found in *The Rationalist Annual* of 1945. Father Knox used to twit the late Professor Sanday with producing an annual statement which, he said, should have been entitled, 'What we may still believe.' *The Rationalist Annual* is interesting as showing, according to their leading supporters, 'what we may still *not* believe.' And, according to this issue, the area of unbelief is shrinking. Several members of the First Eleven are there. Bernard Shaw and J. B. S. Haldane are the opening batsmen, while Julian

[1] *The Times*, April 1, 1944.

[2] Article in *The Search of Faith*, ed. Martin, 1943.

Huxley goes in first wicket down, and Kingsley Martin is well up in the batting order. Who could ask for more ?

But Shaw seems almost more concerned to attack ' Rationalists ' than to attack the Church, Huxley's contribution pays unusual tribute to ' the complexities of theology,' castigating those who ' from a rationalist or humanistic angle dismiss them as meaningless or irrelevant,' while Kingsley Martin roundly declares that ' men cannot live without convictions, and society will not stand without some common faith. Scepticism is not enough.' As Shaw reminds us that there is just as high a percentage of Fundamentalists in Freethought as there is in the Salvation Army, we may conclude that these Freethought Fundamentalists may well be deploring this outbreak of Modernism in their ranks ! Formerly not a good word could be said about religion, but now there is something in religion after all !

All these prancings and cavortings need not concern us unduly, but at least they serve to show that there is a greater willingness at the higher levels of Rationalism to open up the whole matter of religion afresh.

It is just here that the necessity for a carefully considered Apologetic, designed to meet the modern situation as it is unfolding itself, begins to be manifest. What are some of the points towards which an Apologetic in the New Order should be addressing itself ?

First consideration must be given to the relations between Science and Religion. It should not be considered sufficient to show that there is nothing in the so-called assured teachings of science which would preclude whole-hearted acceptance of the historic Christian Faith. There must be an active attempt at full reconciliation, and to that end there ought to be more theologians with training in the natural sciences, and more scientists who have subjected themselves to the discipline of philosophy, and even of theology. ' There is even now hardly a single bishop or prominent Christian leader,' remarks Raven,[1] ' who has ever studied any physical science, and indeed very few who have ever worked in a laboratory.' On the other side, the position is even worse. How many scientists have ever taken the trouble to subject themselves to the discipline either of philosophy or theology before proceeding to declare themselves in these matters with a certain air of finality ? Even for the Pope Infallibility is only claimed when he speaks *ex cathedra* on a matter of Faith or Morals. In practice that means that it is very rarely claimed at all. Yet we have scientists like Dr. C. H. Waddington declaring that ' Science by itself, and so far as I can see, only science by itself, unadulterated by mixture with any contrary ideal, is able to provide mankind with a way of life which is self-consistent and harmonious.' [2] As a result of the war our Arts Faculties have been virtually closed to men, but our Science Faculties have been given every encouragement. This may very well have been a war necessity, but the result is bound to be an increasing number of people whose training has been narrowly scientific, who, indeed, have had no opportunity to get any other kind of training. In this connexion a remark of R. C. K. Ensor is relevant. Discussing Mr. H. G. Wells, he says, ' Suppose, for instance, in addition to a year's biology under Huxley he had done two years' philosophy at Oxford or Glasgow under Nettleship or Edward Caird, and had had the experience of reading Kant at an average pace of less than a page an hour, mentally threshing out all its implications. I think it might, merely as discipline, have been extraordinarily good for him ; besides giving him what he has never acquired, a real comprehension of what is, as distinct from the physical, the metaphysical outlook on the universe.' [3]

No one pleads more cogently for a closer understanding between Science and Religion than Professor Raven does. He is adamant on the point that the Church dare not contract out of its responsibility to relate its faith to all departments of life. The realm of Nature and the realm of Grace are one. In his book, *The Creator Spirit*, published as long ago as 1927, he made his position clear, and he has never withdrawn from it. ' If God the Father be " Maker of all things visible and invisible," if God the Son is He " by whom all things were made," if God the Holy Ghost is " the Giver of Life," then there cannot be a radical dualism between the manifestation in Nature and the manifestation of grace.' [4] ' When scientists open up to us fresh fields of wonder, or bring to us gifts of spiritual value, we welcome them with the " what have we to do with thee ? Art thou come to destroy us ? " or the " Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes." It is this mixture of cringing and scorn that has alienated so many from the Church.' [5]

Since these words were written, recent happenings and utterances in the scientific realm have contributed largely to support the attitude they uphold. When Sir James Jeans tells us that ' many of the former conclusions of nineteenth-century science on philosophical questions are once again in the melting-pot,' [6] we are listening to a very cautious under-statement. The late

[1] *Science, Religion, and the Future*, 61.

[2] *The Scientific Attitude*, 124.
[3] *The Spectator*, Oct. 12, 1943.
[4] *Op. cit.*, 15. [5] *Op. cit.*, 14.
[6] *Physics and Philosophy* (1942), 216.

Sir Arthur Eddington was much more forthright. Talking of 'the rejection of determinism' in physical science, he goes on: 'I cannot agree with those who belittle the philosophical significance of the change. The withdrawal of physical science from an attitude it had adopted consistently for more than two hundred years is not to be treated lightly.'[1] He takes as his definition of determinism the verse of Omar Khayyám:

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

Eddington goes on to say that the physical universe as now pictured is not a universe in which 'the first morning of creation wrote what the last dawn of reckoning shall read.' 'We make it clear that the abandonment of determinism is no technical quibble but is a fundamental change of outlook.'[2] How fundamental it is we have no time to discuss here: sufficient be it for our purpose to remark that the New Apologetic can look with confidence to the findings of our most eminent scientists for support, and that ultimate reconciliation is not an unattainable ideal.

Another matter with which the Apologist must be concerned is the significance of non-religious Communism. Never before has our Apologetic had to consider a problem of this kind. Let me put the issue in the words of Professor John Macmurray:[3] 'Soviet Russia is the first great nation utterly to reject religion and to establish a purely secular civilization in the world. She points the way to a future without God. This is the fact that faces the Christian Church; and its implications are so grave that they make all other religious problems seem insignificant.' If that reading of the situation be correct, and few would dispute its truth, then the Church must make up its mind what its attitude is to be. One thing is fairly certain, and that is that any recent concessions made to the Church in Russia did not involve any change of attitude in the governing powers towards religion. We are handicapped, of course, by the absence of authoritative and uncensored views of the whole Russian scene. We admire her vigour, her resources, and her long struggle, but we feel that we do not know sufficient of the actual facts to be able to form an unbiased judgment. It would seem that, in meeting this particular problem, several things require to be done.

There must be a close and discerning study of Communism; there must be inquiry as to how far Communism and Christianity are allied; and there must also be an Apologetic, not of words but of acts. The Christian Church cannot, in its own defence, allow it to be said that it is less concerned about social inequalities than are the atheistic rulers of Russia.

It ought not to be difficult to show that Communism has been very largely dependent upon the Christian tradition, and that in Professor Macmurray's words, 'It is the pressure of the Christian purpose which lies behind the attacks on established religious authority.' But an Apologetic far more powerful will be a demonstration of the Church's active concern about social conditions here and now in Britain. One sometimes wonders why the Church did not take to heart earlier than it has done the findings of the writers who collaborated in the writing of the volume, *Property*, first published in 1914, and edited by Vernon Bartlet. Bishop Gore, Rashdall, A. D. Lindsay, H. G. Wood, and Scott Holland were among the writers. 'Can we deny,' says Bishop Gore, 'that the Church's conceptions of property and of the obligations of property, and its attitude towards the real needs of the masses of men who have held no property, or received no adequate supply of what life needs for its development, have been wholly different from what the teaching of the prophets and our Lord, and our Fathers in Christendom, would have had them to be? In this respect, as in others, our religion to-day is on its trial.'[4] Gore said that thirty years ago, but little positive action resulted. It is to be hoped that we learn our lesson this time.

No discussion, however brief, of the New Order in Apologetic would be complete without some attention being given to the magnificent work that has been done in vindication of the accuracy of the main Christian tradition as recorded in the Gospels. Here, surely, is the realm above all others where Apologetic stands or falls. Our finest apologists are our New Testament scholars, for they are able to overwhelm with masses of relevant fact those who bring to the interpretation of the records theories which are more often ingenious than convincing. Their task is not an easy one. There is a massive literature to be studied, and, as Principal Fulton reminded us in a recent issue of this journal, there is a growing complexity in the modern interpreter's task. 'A generation ago, before the rise of "Eschatologism," and Form-Criticism, Dr. James Denney found the task of interpretation sufficiently difficult; it is much more difficult now.'[5]

Professor Joad has stated more than once that it is precisely the historical element in Christianity which constitutes the greatest stumbling-block to

[1] *New Pathways in Science* (1935), 73.
[2] *Op. cit.*, 75.
[3] *Congregational Quarterly*, July 1943.
[4] *Property: Its Duties and Rights*, p. xix.
[5] THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, Jan. 1944, 93.

understanding and acceptance. Mr. Lionel Curtis speaks for many more when he rejects the supernatural element while believing in a personal God, in the fundamental difference between right and wrong, that we owe an infinite duty to God and to one another, and that the principal source of inspiration of this faith is the example and teaching of Christ. He is at pains to point out that he cannot accept the Resurrection, and that in any event he sees no need of it. 'Would our faith in the essential doctrines of Christ be shattered if historians discovered unanswerable proofs that the personality of our Lord never appeared to the senses of His followers after His death? My own unhesitating answer is, "No, it wouldn't."' [1] He is impressed by Lessing's famous saying that the contingent events of history can never prove the eternal verities. To put it another way, he is offended by 'the scandal of particularity.' The phrase is that of Professor Gerhard Kittel in *Mysterium Christi*. 'The scandal is the problem of history. Can a particular historical happening be peculiar? Can it be significant *sub specie æternitatis*? And above all, can this particular occurrence be either peculiar or significant?' [2]

There are real difficulties for many here, especially for those who prefer in any event that kind of religion which is detached from dogma, and able to travel light. The philosopher and the theologian have their own ways of dealing faithfully with those who hold these views, but the strongest position is that of the skilled New Testament scholar. For he is able to remind us that, apart from all philosophical reasonings or presuppositions, there are the New Testament records. These remain. They cannot be spirited away. They dare not be ignored. Our very obedience to all that science has taught us demands that they be interpreted; for they are, as records, facts of which we must give convincing account. And much of the so-called scientific humanism that wears arrogance like a flower to-day can only claim intellectual respectability for itself where it is not known that it has wilfully suppressed the most relevant parts of all the evidence with which it claims to deal.

It is striking and significant that every new theory that is put forward in New Testament criticism succeeds finally in eliciting fresh vindication of the trustworthiness of the record. Dr. C. H. Dodd in *History and the Gospel*, A. E. J. Rawlinson, the Bishop of Derby, in *Christ in the Gospels*, and, not least, Dr. William Manson in *Jesus the Messiah* are among those to-day who deserve well of the Church for the manner in which they hold what must always be the line of defence that is important above all others. As Dr. Rawlinson remarks, 'It is on all grounds the more probable hypothesis that the faith arose out of the facts, rather than that the alleged facts were created by, and arose out of, a faith which itself arose no one knows how.' [3] With a wealth of learning, Dr. Manson leads us to the same kind of result, and has provided, so far as the New Testament is concerned, as powerful an Apologetic as any New Order could wish.

If, then, we desire to bring our Apologetic right up to date, the best thing we can do is to take our stand with our most recent interpreters. The New Testament is still our mightiest weapon, and it will not easily be torn from our grasp. My final word comes from another master of New Testament scholarship, Dr. Vincent Taylor. Writing in the *Hibbert Journal* of October, 1934, on 'M. Loisy on the Birth of Christianity,' Dr. Taylor says, 'When Christian apologists take the Christ of the Synoptic Gospels as the starting-point for a legitimate development which reaches its culmination in the Nicene Creed and the Catholic Church, they are obviously making considerable demands on the power of faith. But, after all, what are these demands compared with those of M. Loisy? He begins with a Jesus who is a deluded prophet, who has not even the qualities of greatness, and he ascribes to Christian devotion the power to transform the obscure Galilean prophet into the Lord of the Kingdom and finally into the Christ adored by the Catholic Church. What but the faith that moves mountains is capable of such a conception? Once the awkward corner is turned —and, of course, it is only a question of turning the corner!—they see no obstacles which prevent the development from reaching its triumphant goal. What is this but the spirit which says, *Credo quia impossibile*? The truth is, there should be no thought of excommunicating those who possess such faith; they deserve rather to be canonized and to have their effigies placed in the vacant niches of some cathedral.'

[1] *The Christian News-Letter*, No. 186.
[2] Kittel, in *op. cit.*, 31.
[3] *Op. cit.*, 115.

# Literature.

## CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS.

UNDER the title, *The Predicament of the Church* (Lutterworth Press; 8s. 6d. net), a number of more or less related essays have recently been published. We notice they are based for the most part on articles that appeared in 1943 at points so far removed from each other as New York, London, Madras, and Cape Town. As one might expect, there is no formal unity among them. But they are in substantial agreement as to the world's need of the Christian religion.

The volume opens well with a helpful essay by the Master of Balliol on Duty to God and State. He affirms that the functions of State and Church are distinct but complementary; that it is the business of the State to act as a protection for the free life of society, and of the Church to inspire that free life. It is through prophets that inspiration comes, and no society can do without prophets. They are needed to keep Cæsar in his place. As Christians are called to be saints, they are also in their degree called to be prophets. All this is expounded in the clear, simple, and forceful fashion characteristic of the author, and with present-day issues in view.

We should like to quote his comment on the teaching of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. It teaches that love means action. We cannot therefore love everybody. For action must be specific and definite. 'If the good Samaritan had contented himself with handing out to all distressed persons he met by the roadside assistance tickets to be handed by the recipient to the Jerusalem-Jericho Distressed Travellers' Aid Society, he might have handed out quite a number in the course of his journey and it might have cost him money, but he would never have been the subject of Jesus' parable. Plato said that in his ideal city all the citizens should be friends. Aristotle, with his usual dry common sense, comments that it would be a very watery friendship.'

A. D. Lindsay's essay is followed by a cognate one on the Church's Rôle in Politics. It is the longest in the book, and the most technical in form and expression. The authors, A. H. Murray and M. Versfeld, contend that politics should be freed from naturalism, and more particularly from the naturalism of economics, and restored to ethics—'the position to which the medieval mind had attained and which we have since lost.' It is the plea that F. G. Peabody put forward so eloquently in the last generation. And in their thoughtful exposition these authors emphasize the place and function of the Christian Church as the guardian of the ethical principles.

The essay by Benedicta Rowe gives a useful conspectus of the history of the Christian Church, deploring its divisions and making an earnest appeal for Christian unity. This is followed by the essay whose title has been chosen as the title of the book. It is from the busy pen of Emil Brunner and abounds in practical suggestions for the greater efficiency of the Church's ministry and the better mobilization of its 'laymen.' While the author casts a discerning eye over Christendom, much of what he says is strictly relevant only in the context of the Swiss or at any rate Continental Reformed Church.

In the succeeding essays F. B. Welbourn, writing firmly on the Punishment of War Criminals, maintains that there is a 'German tradition' to be eradicated; Patricia Owen, raising the question whether Germany can share in Re-education, contemplates the possibility, or even probability, of an 'inner mission' being required and requested; while Tiran Nersoyan, an observer from the Armenian Church, would ask us to discard the 'myth' that Christianity and Communism cannot be reconciled.

The essay by C. G. Schweitzer, which considers what the Older Churches might learn from the Younger, concludes the series. It is largely because of their topicality that we have called attention to these essays; for they make a 'mixed bag' in more senses than one.

W. FULTON.

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The Rev. Arthur Temple Cadoux, B.A., D.D., has published a useful little commentary under the title, *The Thought of St. James* (James Clarke; 3s. 6d. net). One of the points he seeks to establish is the literary dependence of the Epistle of St. James on the First Epistle of St. Peter. On the relation of St. James to St. Paul on the subject of faith and works here is the proffered solution of the question: 'Paul would have agreed with James that faith without works is dead: James would have agreed with Paul that without faith a man cannot be saved. Paul's insistence on salvation by faith and not by works was aimed at the Jew's glorying in his own fulfilment of the law; James's insistence on works was aimed at the Jew who gloried in his creed at the expense of his conduct.' If we may accept such a solution of an age-long question, we may also agree with Dr. Cadoux that for non-dogmatic ages the thought of St. James is likely to be more helpful than the Pauline theology.

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A book on the future life is timely, especially when it is so well-informed and restrained as this—*Can We Still Believe in Immortality?*, by the Rev. F. C. Grant, Professor of Biblical Theology in Union Theological Seminary, New York (Cloister Press, Louisville; $2.00). The author wrote it because there are so many people who are asking: What happens to those men who have given their lives in battle? Are they alive? Shall we see them again? Is there a larger life, and what is it like? We all want to reassure them if we can, and certainly this book will go a long way to do that. In three massive chapters,

'The Christian Belief in Immortality,' 'Immortality in Modern Thought,' and 'Can We Still Believe in Immortality?' he passes in review all that has been said and believed in ancient and modern times, and he brings us in persuasive, because convincing, argument to a Christian conclusion.

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A book of one hundred and forty-seven pages by the Rev. Trevor Jalland, D.D., marks, one hopes, the conclusion of the barrage of assault by the Anglo-Catholic section of the Church of England on the South Indian Scheme of Union—*The Bible, the Church and South India* (Dacre Press; 5s. net). This provides a more elaborate examination of the Scheme than was possible in the many pamphlets that preceded it and gives evidence of much learning as well as of strong opinions. But, however learned Dr. Jalland is, it does not seem probable that he can dispose of the views of Dr. Streeter, for example, by describing his reconstruction of Early Church order as 'somewhat discredited.'

His own position is, perhaps, sufficiently indicated by the fact that he stands by the Athanasian Creed as 'embodying the essential elements of the Christian tradition' (p. 86), and so deserving a place in the united Church. He also alleges that the Scheme 'subordinates the authority of the Church to that of the text of Holy Scripture' as though the framers of the Scheme maintained a doctrine of verbal inspiration (pp. 33 and 87). He considers also that to present this Scheme of Union is 'to browbeat one's fellow Anglicans.' Surely that is not the spirit in which any proposals for union, so seriously framed and so long pondered, should be approached. What the situation in South India is at the present time it is difficult to find out, but one still must believe that the hopes that this effort at union, made so courageously and sustained by so much faith, has aroused throughout the Christian world will not be disappointed.

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*Happiness, Freedom and God*, by Mr. C. A. Richardson, M.A. (Harrap; 7s. 6d. net), has an appetizing title, but it makes difficult reading. It moves mainly along the bare heights of metaphysics, and the long chapter on Time and Causality is profoundly mathematical. It seeks to demonstrate the theory, now generally accepted, that the absolute mechanical linkage on which the old materialism was based is non-existent, and that causality must be expressed in terms of probability. The writer conceives that 'reality is a plurality of interacting monads together with a supreme monad, God, who is immanent in all the individuals of the plurality, but also transcends, and is not merely identical with, the plurality.' Happiness is held to be the ultimate end of human action. The idea of moral responsibility is meaningless and indeed harmful. 'All principles of conduct should be related to results in terms of happiness—that is, that we should say, in effect, not that it is *good* or *right* to act in such and such a way because the will of God or the moral law requires it, but that it is *wise* to act in this way because it leads to happiness, remembering that, generally speaking, the happiness of an individual is bound up with that of others.' At the close of his argument, which is closely reasoned and packed with thought, the writer has a brief section in which he seeks to show that 'there is clearly no incompatibility between my theories and the essential articles of the Christian faith.'

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The wild mountains of the Burma Road are much in the news in these war days and names like Myitkyina and the Salween River have become familiar. The publication, therefore, of an account of missionary work in these remote and inaccessible regions is both timely and of special interest. *Behind the Ranges*, by Mrs. Howard Taylor (Lutterworth Press; 8s. 6d. net), is a record of the life and labours of J. O. Fraser who went as a pioneer among the hill tribes of Yunnan and laboured there for thirty years until it was given him to see the rich fruits of his work in the conversion of thousands of these primitive people. In the story much prominence is given to the reality and power of his prayer-life, the centre of all his activities. This is a heartsome and inspiring book.

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The Rev. T. Cullen Young, who has already written informatively on primitive races, particularly in Africa, seeks in a pamphlet or booklet entitled *Herrenvolk and Sahib-Log* (Lutterworth Press; 1s. 6d. net), to reinforce the idea of a nation's trusteeship for backward races under its rule. It is time, as he says, that we British people took this idea more seriously. We are engaged in a war against racial discrimination, and we should examine ourselves as to whether we can engage in it with a clear conscience. Is not a certain *Herrenvolk* theory at the root of our difficulties in India? Do not *Herrenvolk* and *Sahib-Log* mean exactly the same thing? No one, as he says, who has had experience of a certain type of Sahib can doubt that grave dangers beset any nation placed by circumstances in a position of power among another race, temporarily inferior and subservient.

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*But—Suppose He was Right*, by the Rev. Max Warren (Marshall, Morgan & Scott; 2s. net), contains four addresses on the way of Jesus in dealing with men. It is a way of Love, of Imagination, of Faith, and of Forgiveness. The writer is the general secretary of the Church Missionary Society and very naturally he illustrates the methods of Jesus and the effectiveness of His way by incidents drawn from the mission field. These are very apt and impressive, and they confirm the writer's faith that God's way with men, as revealed in the attitude and work of Jesus, is the only wise and hopeful way for our modern war-torn world.

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One is inclined to regard amateur psychologists with suspicion, which increases with experience. Many half-trained, or untrained, people are trying their prentice hands on the souls of their fellows, sometimes with disastrous results. So that one

opens a book like *Say I to Myself* (Milford ; 10s. net) with modified anticipation. The author, however, the Rev. Phillips Endecott Osgood, is a Lecturer in Applied Psychology as well as an experienced clergyman, and he has a great respect for our souls. His book is addressed to people who are in the making and who have yet to learn 'the artistry of self-management.' And, out of the riches of his experience, he addresses us in a series of 'informal lectures,' or teaching sermons, telling us how to manage our lives. The result is a good book, with sound sense, humour, understanding, wisdom, and encouragement. He is a little flamboyant in his titles—Gearshifts, Pou Sto, Harpoon Anchor, The Tear-bottle Habit, Balm and Honey and Spices, and (one of the best) Wayside Brooks.

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One of the problems confronting the teacher of Scripture is that of putting a sane view of the Old Testament before young children without losing sight of the moral and spiritual values involved. Any one who has felt this difficulty would do well to consult a little book by Mr. Neil L. Pritchard, B.A., which the S.P.C.K. has issued under the title, *The Presentation of the Old Testament* (3s. net). Here we have a simple statement of the right way in which the narratives of the Old Testament should be approached. Then different types of literature are discussed—history, prophecy, and poetry. Special chapters are given to the post-exilic literature, symbolism and allegory, and the general results of archæological research. 'Notes for Teachers' are appended to each chapter, and there is a short but very good bibliography. Mr. Pritchard is himself a competent student of the Old Testament, and succeeds in combining a modern point of view—though occasionally some scholars would want to modify small points—with a genuinely devotional spirit.

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# Did Jesus Speak Aramaic?

By the Very Reverend R. O. P. Taylor, M.A., Ringwood, Hants.

For some time past, various persons of importance have been repeating, 'Jesus spoke Aramaic,' with the implication that He spoke nothing else, and the further implication that, since we have only a translation, we can never be quite sure that His meaning has been properly transmitted. Since, then, 'Jesus spoke Aramaic' is by way of becoming a dogma, it is surely necessary to examine its basis.

For both convenience and fairness, our examination will follow the lines of James Young's article on the Language of Christ in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. We choose this both because of the authority which that Dictionary, like the rest of the series, has rightly acquired, and also because the author gives his verdict on what we may call the Aramaic side.

It is to be observed that he rules out the idea that Jesus knew no Greek. He says 'It may reasonably be assumed that Christ would acquire some knowledge of Greek, and be able, in some measure at least, to speak it.' He then proceeds to put the question as it ought to be put: 'Was it, then, Aramaic or Greek that Christ habitually employed in His public ministry?' Then he goes on to say 'The question resolves itself into that of the relative prevalence of the two languages in the country at that time, so far as that can be determined by such evidence, direct and indirect, as is available.'

He rightly makes little of the three occasions on which Christ is recorded to have expressed Himself in Aramaic. It must be granted that the third, the quotation, on the Cross, from Psalm 22, looks towards the Aramaic conclusion. But the question is difficult, and as Mr. Young does not rest his case upon it, we may be allowed to let it stand.

We pass on, then, to the grounds on which he makes his decision. He says 'The case for Aramaic as the prevailing language of Palestine in the time of Christ, and the language which Christ must necessarily have employed generally in His teaching, are incontestably established by the direct evidence of the Acts and of Josephus.' Before discussing this evidence, however, we must take the liberty of narrowing the field. From childhood Christ and His chief disciples belonged to Galilee. The Gospels are mainly the account of a Galilean ministry. It is to Galilee that we must look. For Galilee had its own character. To quote G. W. Thatcher (in *H.D.C.G.*, under 'Galilee'): 'The most important difference between them (the Galileans) and the people of Judæa lay in the different attitude in daily life towards the larger world of the Roman Empire and Hellenistic influence. Knowledge of, at any rate spoken, Greek was to them a necessity of business, and no attempt could be made, as in Jerusalem, to avoid the study of it. Many must have been, like Matthew, in Government employ. All were brought into daily contact with Greek and Roman modes of life and thought. It was to this people of larger experience of life and broader ways of thinking that Jesus appealed in the greater part of His earthly ministry, and from it that He chose

the men who were first to make His message known to the world.'

The full consequences of this may be left to the reader's consideration. But it has a specific bearing on the first of Mr. Young's prime arguments. He quotes (from Ac $1^{19}$) : ' It was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem ; insomuch as that field is called *in their own tongue* Akeldama.' This he regards as proving that Aramaic was ' the popular language even of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.' (That word ' even ' is worth noticing.) The shakiness of this argument appears as soon as we look at analogous cases. Thus, for example, there may well be some spot on the outskirts of Cardiff which is known by a Welsh name. This would, quite rightly, be said to be in their own tongue. For all that, English is by far the more prevalent language in Cardiff. But even were Mr. Young's argument final, it would only hold for Jerusalem, and so be off the point.

Secondly, he quotes Paul saying to Agrippa, in describing his conversion, ' I heard a voice speaking unto me . . . *in the Hebrew tongue* ' and adds ' by " Hebrew " St. Paul undoubtedly meant Aramaic ' —a questionable statement. His comment is, ' That the ascended Christ should have spoken to Saul in Aramaic is unintelligible except on the supposition that that had been the language which He had spoken while on earth, and that it was the prevailing language of Palestine.' I fail to see how the latter conclusion results on its predecessor. But even the former conclusion is not inevitable. It might be argued that since Paul's companions (who were probably Temple officers) heard the voice but could not distinguish the words, that the voice spoke in Hebrew. Or again it might be argued, assuming the hearing to be subjective, that Paul's brain grasped the divine message in the language most familiar to it. That would mean that Paul habitually thought in Aramaic. If so, it was no index to the language in which he taught. Or, again, it might be argued that Paul must have heard Jesus speak in Jerusalem. If Jesus spoke Aramaic there, why did not Paul recognize the voice ? For he had to ask who it was, and Jesus had to give His name and designation. That would prove that Jesus spoke Greek at Jerusalem. It is plain then that there is not any one certain deduction to be made from the incident. Mr. Young's argument is, therefore, not decisive.

He next quotes the incident at Paul's arrest, when the crowd ascertained from his opening words that he was going to make his address in Aramaic, ' they kept the more silence.' Mr. Young takes it that the deeper silence into which they settled proves that they were more familiar with the Aramaic language than with Greek, and that the latter was the language generally spoken by them. But the scene is again Jerusalem, and the audience is labouring under a fury of fanatical nationalism. As this act was a piece of deliberate diplomacy on Paul's part, it scarcely warrants the conclusion. It need prove no more than that they were bi-lingual.

Next we are told that ' the evidence of *Josephus* is as direct and conclusive as that furnished by the Acts of the predominance of Aramaic.' First, Mr. Young mentions how Josephus tells that during the siege of Jerusalem, the watchmen warned their companions of the discharge of the Roman missiles by crying out ' in their own tongue,' The dart is coming. But if they always spoke Aramaic, why should Josephus specially remark it ? Second, he mentions that Josephus tells us how he communicated the proposals to the besieged ' in their native tongue.' Again, this is all concerned with Jerusalem, and once more with men worked up into a fury against all that the Greek tongue stood for. It does not prove the predominance of Aramaic in ordinary times, even in Jerusalem.

Lastly, in this statement of the ' incontestable proofs ' as Mr. Young styles them, comes Josephus' recording, in his preface to his *Wars of the Jews*, that that work was at first written in Aramaic and afterwards translated into Greek. Here is the passage in Mr. Young's own translation :

> ' I have proposed to myself, for the sake of such as live under the government of the Romans, to translate these books into the Greek tongue, which I formerly composed in *the language of our own country*, and sent to the Upper Barbarians ' (*i.e.* non-Greek speakers).

This is supposed to show that Josephus' first instinct was to write in Aramaic, from which it is to be inferred that he preferred to write in Aramaic, from which, again, it is to be inferred that Aramaic was predominant in Palestine. But all this depends on fixing attention on the words, ' the language of our own country.' But there are other points to be looked at. It would appear that the composition in Aramaic did not arise spontaneously, so to speak. It is most likely that the Emperor had ordered it to be written, and written in that language, in order to reach and menace the non-Greek speaking Jews of Upper Syria.[1] This occasion, then, was exactly like those

[1] St. John Thackeray in his preface to *Josephus*, i., says: ' The first draft was written in Aramaic for the benefit of the natives of Upper Syria : being penned in Vespasian's former palace by his pensioner, it was probably of the nature of a manifesto, inspired by his imperial patrons and intended as a warning to the East of the futility of further opposition ' (p. xi.).

on which Josephus was turned on to speak in Aramaic to the fanatics, congregated in Jerusalem. He himself informs us of these occasions. And his very remarking that he then spoke in Aramaic shows that such was not his habit. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the *Wars of the Jews* forms only about a quarter of Josephus' writings. There is no suggestion whatever that any part of the remaining three-quarters had an Aramaic predecessor. They appear to have been written straight off in Greek. The quotation, therefore, does not prove that Josephus used Aramaic normally and Greek only on occasion. Nor does it prove that Aramaic preponderated in Palestine. In that same preface, Josephus specifies the countries to which the Aramaic book was sent: 'the Parthians, Babylon, the remotest Arabians, and those of our nation beyond Euphrates with the Adiabeni.' But Palestine is not on the list, and as Josephus was then in Rome, the book would have to be sent, if it was to get there. On the other hand, Josephus states that he wrote the Greek version for those living under the government of Rome. Palestine was certainly among these. So, as far as the passage goes it is evidence for the use of Greek rather than Aramaic in Palestine at that time. So the 'incontestable proof' is of no avail.

It is true that this piece of evidence indicates a state of affairs which might appear incredible, the submergence of a language which was afterwards to reappear. But the papyri display exactly such an occurrence taking place in northern Egypt. There, at the opening of our era, the use of Greek permeated all classes and all life. The native language which was 'their own tongue' practically disappears. Yet it must have maintained its existence somehow, since in the long run, it reasserted itself and drove out the intruder. But, in the meantime, for centuries, Greek was prevalent, and that not only among the higher classes, but, as some of the papyri plainly show, among persons who were almost illiterate. We are bound to estimate the possibilities in Galilee, and even in Jerusalem, in the light of this known fact.

As the arguments, which we have reviewed, are those on which Mr. Young relies, it scarcely seems necessary to discuss the subsidiary considerations which he adduces. We will therefore leave them, and turn to an authority whom he does not quote. No one has investigated the local conditions of the times more thoroughly than George Adam Smith has done in his *Historical Geography*. He is particularly emphatic about the Hellenization of Galilee. The subject keeps recurring in his book, but we shall confine ourselves to two quotations:

> 'The many roads which crossed Galilee from the Decapolis to the coast, the many inscriptions upon them, the constant trade between the fishermen and the Greek exporters of their fish, the very coins—everywhere thrust Greek upon the Jews of Galilee. The Aramaic dialect began now to be full of Greek words. It is impossible to believe that our Lord and His disciples did not know Greek' (ch. 28 finish).
>
> 'Not the jargon of the fanatics and brigands in the highlands of Galilee, but the speech of the fishermen of her lake has become the language of the world's religion' (ch. 21 fin.).

Two comments may be added. The former extract is the only one, so far as I have observed, in which George Adam Smith mentions Aramaic in connexion with the Galilee of the time. The second reminds us that it was to the fanatics who were wrecking Jerusalem that Josephus made his Aramaic speeches.

Once it is realized what manner of place Galilee was, the question settles itself. To put it at the lowest, here was a man devoting himself to the teaching of truths essential to the well-being of all mankind. The plan which he adopted was to go out on the roads—roads which were continually traversed by Greek speakers. Surely he would not conceal his teaching from them by restricting himself to a tongue only understood locally. He knew himself to be sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. He saw for himself on those roads—as he was to see equally plainly at Jerusalem—that the majority of those lost sheep had Greek for their familiar tongue. Would he allow Aramaic to come as a wall between him and them? He was conscious, as I believe, that he was charged with a message from God to the whole world. He knew well that Greek was the one language in which the whole world could hear the message. It may be that in some secluded places, he talked in Aramaic. But on the road and in the cities, where he addressed his usual audiences, he must have chosen the language which was not only understood by all, but would carry beyond Galilee. To go further still, I believe that it was in the Divine providence that Galilee was set at the cross-roads of the world. And I also believe that it was no accident, but part of the Divine plan, that the *lingua franca* of those roads was a world-language in which God's proclamation could be carried to the ends of the earth. Jesus was part of God's plan, the possession by the world of a common tongue was part of God's plan, the Roman roads which bound the world together were part of God's plan, and all three coincided in Galilee.

# In the Study.

## Virginibus Puerisque.

### Forbidding Folks.

By the Reverend George Johnstone Jeffrey, B.D., Glasgow.

'They that did see me without fled from me.'—Ps $31^{11}$.

'Men shun me in the street.'—(Moffatt).

The other morning I was travelling by train with other five ministers to attend a meeting. There we were, three on each side of the compartment, sleek, shaven, and all wearing our clerical collars. The train stopped at a station. On the platform were groups of children travelling to school. Three girls made for our carriage and the biggest of them opened the door. She gave us a swift look of alarm, shouted 'Help!', banged the door and fled!

Now why? Are we parsons such dreadful people? Why do 'they that see us, flee from us?' You see the incident raises a far bigger question. Why are there so many goodish people who are so unattractive? We would rather slip down a side street than meet them face to face. I read lately a 'potted parable.' It went like this. 'Why are people so stand-offish?', *said the porcupine*? Why are there so many otherwise worthy people whom we want to run away from? I suppose you have your list of such folks and I have mine. Let's get together about this business and see if we can't remedy things.

To begin with, there is *the Boaster*.

> We've got *him* on the list
> *He* never would be missed.

If you and I want to send people scattering from us in all directions then let's keep speaking about ourselves, our cleverness, our achievements, our successes. This failing is a sad one at any time, surely most contemptible in time of war. Every day splendid deeds are being done in the air, on land, and at sea, and all without fuss, with utter modesty. The Navy is called 'The Silent Service.' These men *do* things. They don't *speak* about them. And the men in the Navy would be the first to say that their comrades in the Air Force or the Army are just the same. What a bloom it gives to a noble life, this gift of self-effacement! One of the greatest life-stories ever penned is that of Madame Curie, the discoverer of Radium. Of her it was said that 'She did not know how to be famous.' She was so completely taken up with her grand work that she scorned praise and ribbons and medals. And the result was that she was one of the most attractive women who ever lived. Well, let us try to be of the high company of the self-forgetters, and wherever we go we will be welcome.

The second on my black list is *ungrateful people*. I am quite sure that Jesus Himself found this type of folks very trying. We read of His healing ten men stricken with leprosy and out of the ten only one returned to give Him thanks, and he a Samaritan. It hurt Jesus dreadfully. We don't do kind things in order to get thanks, but ingratitude chills us. It dries up the springs of loving-kindness. Writing in the papers a man said lately: 'I don't know what is coming over people, perhaps it is the war, but I'll tell you what I find. Like most men I always make it my business to open a door for a lady and stand aside to let her pass through. But I calculate that only two out of five ever say "Thank you," and I'm getting a bit disheartened.' I think he had a perfect right to be. Never were better manners more needed than in wartime. If you find people shunning you, may it not be that you have a habit of taking kindnesses too easily for granted? There are perhaps no two words in the language that sweeten life's bitterness like these two and they are very cheap 'Thank you.'

The last are, in my opinion, the worst offenders of all—*moody people*: folks who are gay and gushing one day and sour and churlish the next, one day smooth as a tom-cat, the next, bristling like a porcupine. Save me from these people. 'But we can't be always the same,' you say. Granted, but when we know that every day we live, we have the happiness or misery of others in our keeping, what an incentive it is to control our moods! The truth is there is no better discipline in the world for any of us than just *having* to be genial and thoughtful towards others. I read a sermon lately on 'The *Sin* of Sadness,' a very striking sermon. And sadness, gloom, moodiness *is* a sin if we make a habit of spreading it wherever we go. Be big enough to smother your sadness. Be bigger still and scatter your gladness. The world needs it desperately these days. And the One who can show you best how to do this is Jesus Christ. He kept His sadnesses to Himself, His joy He radiated everywhere. No wonder the children ran to Him and all manner of downcast people loved to be with Him. Catch His secret and no one will ever shun you on the street.

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### The Road to Victory.

By the Reverend T. E. Edmond, M.A., Little Heath, Potters Bar.

'But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith.'—Jude 20.

Paris liberated! Marseilles freed! German Seventh Army smashed! Americans at the German frontier! D Day! News flash following fast on news flash! What weeks they were! Not in our wildest dreams did we anticipate anything so overwhelmingly victorious, sudden, and dramatic. There was no one so conceited as to

say, I told you so. We thank God it has turned out like that.

It seems strange that the pattern of this war has always been the same. If you look back over the five years, you will notice that it has nearly always been silence, then a dramatic event, then silence, followed by another great victory. All the campaigns have been the same. A silence so deep for a while, that many have turned to each other and wondered, then all of a sudden it seemed to the outsider, a colossal victory, and then again the news has been silent, and everybody has become anxious. Then again followed the swift collapse of the enemy.

I asked some of my military friends the meaning of this pattern of events. They have explained the meaning of modern military strategy. They tell me that the technical explanation of modern mechanical warfare is that it is all a matter of supplies. A great modern army cannot advance until it has built up its stores. It needs stores of ammunition. It requires vast quantities of petrol, and as for spare parts, it's just terrific. The army cannot go forward to victory until it has built up its supplies.

So the great spiritual principle is underlined by the illustration of modern military strategy. You cannot make progress in goodness without resources. 'Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out' said the foolish virgins in the parable. They discovered too late that they could not go on to meet the bridegroom because they had not got the oil. They had no reserves.

There are crowds of people in the world to-day who cannot go forward. They feel themselves failing, they know it. Their ideals have nearly gone. The things that they would not that they do. They are drifting with the tide of popular opinion. The simple reason is that they have no supplies of grace, knowledge, and love, to carry them on. They have no resources of spiritual power and moral conviction to enable them to put their ideals into practice.

Why should I go to Church? Why make a rule about my prayers? Why should I be bothered about a rule of giving to my Church? Why must I go to Church on Sundays, when I don't feel like it? The answer is in every case the same—to get supplies. We don't go to Church or a place of worship because it is the respectable thing to do in our road. It requires courage to do these things. But it is the way 'to build up yourselves on your most holy faith.'

I expect you have heard of the water spider of a certain variety. It lives under the surface of the pond. It builds itself a little nest of fluff and twigs, and there it lives. But every now and again those who have watched its habits have seen it go up to the surface of the water and bring down a little bubble of air, held tight between its hairy feet. So it lives 'in the world and yet not of it.' It has the instinct by which it knows that you cannot live without supplies. It must build up its resources.

Someone said to me after a course of Christian instruction, 'I never knew there was so much to learn about religion.' Many more people are outside the Church because they don't really know anything about religion than because they do. I have frequently listened to people giving reasons why they do not come to Church, which would not stand the test of common sense in any other sphere of life. In fact, they have no store of knowledge from which to draw.

We must be ever building up our reserves. 'To keep ourselves in the Love of God' is the best way to prepare ourselves for each advance.

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## The Christian Year.

First Sunday after Epiphany.

### Concerning the Future.

By the Reverend James Reid, D.D., Eastbourne.

'Would you question me about the future? Would you dictate to me about my work?' says the Eternal. —Is $45^{11}$ (Moffatt).

We are all concerned about the future. Many people are afraid of it. There is a growing disquietude about the perplexities and the dangers that will face us when Europe is freed from the yoke, and peace returns. The optimism that followed the end of the last war is in danger of being replaced by pessimism after this. This mood has its dangers. It is apt to bring a listlessness, even a loss of nerve that may make us incapable of right action.

There are comforting things we can say to ourselves. There are Clough's words, 'If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.' There is also the old saying, born of experience, that things are seldom as good as we hope or as bad as we fear. But the only way to find a firm foothold is in the outlook of faith.

The first part of the answer of faith is that God is the Lord of history. This is what the prophet Isaiah was continually dinning into the ears of his people. It is God who in the end controls the stream of events, and uses them to work out His own purpose. One of the best illustrations of this fact was in the use of Cyrus to set free the Jewish exiles from Babylon. Cyrus was 'a gold cup in the Lord's hand.' He was a brilliant leader and had many fine qualities. But the one great impulse that now ranks as the 'sole work of his lifetime' was that he set free those Jews to go back to Jerusalem and carry on that purpose of God which issued in the coming of Christ. He had not the least idea that in this act he was God's instrument, and that God was using it to shape the future to a Christian pattern. But so it was. God is the Lord of history.

The prophet had to remind the exiles of this truth rather sharply. They did not like this kind of deliverance. They did not know what it might portend. They were suspicious, critical, afraid. But God pulled them up. 'Shall the clay say to the potter, What makest thou? Will ye question Me about the future?' The text is not easy to translate, but it really means, as someone

has put it, 'Concerning the future, leave Me to care.'

It is a good word for us all in these days. God knows what He is shaping through all the chaos and confusion of our time and our human thwarting and resisting of His will. We may not like the process or the kind of instruments He uses, any more than the Jews liked Cyrus. One day we may see that even Hitler was one of God's unconscious instruments, forcing the world to see where it was drifting and to make a choice. We do not like the turbulent elements which are making trouble in some parts of Europe. One day we may find that they have their place in opening doors to new ideas. But we can be sure that God rules and guides, shaping its strange events as a potter the clay, working out His own designs. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him. He counters the movements that seem to thwart His purpose and uses them to advance it, as a brilliant chess-player does with the movements of a learner, who only sees one move ahead and, when he has taken a castle or a knight, thinks that he has won the game.

We all have our particular fears about the future. In some cases it is our own immediate future we are disquieted about or that of our families. In other cases it is the future of the world, its prospects of settled peace and an orderly Christian civilization. Some may even fear for the Kingdom of God, the final victory of Jesus Christ. That is the last thing we should ever be pessimistic about. For, whatever is uncertain, the victory of Christ is sure. The future is in God's hands and sooner or later it will move in the orbit of Christ. Nothing can thwart the purpose of God that shines out in Him. If we get hold of this faith and see God in the vision of His power and love which Christ reveals, we can leave the future in His hands. That quiet serenity is of the essence of faith. 'Concerning the future, leave Me to care.'

But is there nothing for us to do. We feel so helpless amid the sweep and drive of these tremendous forces, like a tiny boat in the grip of a tempest. There is something very definite for us to do. It is the duty that lies to our hand, the service we can render, the work of the day and of the hour. Miss Dorothy Sayers, speaking of the battle of Britain and what we did then in face of an apparently hopeless future, says in *The Christian News-Letter*, 'We of all people ought not to let ourselves be hag-ridden by history, especially by that which is not history until we make it. The English spirit is in nothing so naturally Christian as in its native preference for coping with situations as they arise, not surrendering the will to horrid phantasies, but settling the *present* quarrel, confronting the *imminent* menace, performing the *immediate* act of justice or charity, perceiving the situation as it now is and addressing all available energy to that.' She calls this a peculiarly Christian grace; and so it is. When some people in the Early Church were caught up by dreams of the second coming of Christ, they started leaving their work, losing interest in the present duty. What did these matter, they told themselves, when Christ was coming to ring down the curtain on this old world? But St. Paul pulled them up sternly, bidding them stick to their work. 'Let every man in the calling in which he is called therein abide, with God.' That does not mean, of course, burying our heads in the sand. If we are to do the immediate duty aright and know what it is, there are times when we must look ahead and make plans. The point is that we must not let the future intimidate or enfeeble us.

At one point in his life R. L. Stevenson was lying in bed in Bournemouth, unable to speak because of a hæmorrhage of the lungs, unable to read because of opthalmia, unable to write because of writer's cramp. Could any prospect be more hopeless! But he had a book to write and he wrote it, dictating to a friend by means of the dummy alphabet. 'If the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make a brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week.' There is one thing we can do, the thing that lies to hand, the task to be finished, the comfort we can give, the bit of service to which Christ calls us. That is where we take a hand with God in the shaping of the future.

For there is this also that we need to see. The Lord of History is the guide and inspiration of our individual actions. He shapes the events of history but He also appoints our daily task. It is there, in these day to day actions, that His eternal purpose becomes incarnate in time. We may not see how these little acts of faithfulness can play any part in the movements of history or the plan of God. But the whole meaning of Christ's message is to give our little lives significance. 'The harmony of life,' says Mr. Middleton Murry, 'is found in knowing that history has a meaning, and to be assured that one has a creative part, however small, to bear in its unfolding.'

When Scott and Wilson were tramping back from the South Pole, there came a time when every step was an agony and the future became ever darker with despair. But they went on day after day. When at length they pitched their tent for the last time, they did not give way to fate. They had letters to write, and in Wilson's letter to his wife the faith that sustained them comes out. 'Don't be unhappy—all is for the best. We are playing a good part in a great scheme arranged by God Himself, and all is well.' They did not know what that part was. But we who look back can see a little of the part it played. The story has purified the spirit of man and given us one more vision of greatness to lift our eyes from the dust. It has put heart and courage into many a life, slogging through days of drudgery with no star in the sky.

There are two things for us to do. One is to lay hold of this faith, that, as Hocking puts it, 'the swing of a man's arm can coincide with the arc of God's purpose.' What we do from day to day, however humble, can have eternal meaning.

The other is to catch the light of that purpose as it shines in Christ, in His life and spirit and Cross, and let it inspire and guide our daily duty.

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Then we can even take to ourselves, when things are hard and the way is dark, what was said of Christ as He strode with steadfast faith into the gloom of Calvary, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.'

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SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

## The Achievement of the Good Life.

BY THE REVEREND RONALD W. THOMSON, BURTON-ON-TRENT.

'Shew me thy glory.'—Ex $33^{18}$.
'Make me to know my transgression and my sin.'—Job $13^{23}$.
'Teach me to do thy will.'—Ps $143^{10}$.

There is in most of us the wise conviction that we have as one of our tasks within this world the achievement of the good life—that life which is set free from its own inner bondage, the life which has power to meet the problems and the difficulties of human nature and human relationships triumphantly, the life which is free from strain and tension, the life in which we can be the best that is possible for us, the life in which we can know the fellowship of Jesus Christ. This is the pattern of the good life as set forth in the New Testament. But though the pattern is clear and straightforward, there is no pretence in us, or in the sayings of Jesus, that it will be found easy. It is indeed through the straight gate, and down the narrow way that we enter into this large life.

There are three prayers which, I believe, will help us in our great task of achieving the good life—three prayers which are recorded for us in the Bible, and come from men like ourselves. The first of these is one of the earliest prayers recorded in the Old Testament; it is a prayer of Moses that God would show him His glory.

*Knowledge of God.*

That we may know God, that He will reveal Himself to us, is a vital prayer, a key prayer. You cannot understand yourself, you cannot attempt to put together this strange jig-saw puzzle of human existence until you have seen God in human life, and are sure that He does stand at the centre of it, and know that He is the explanation of it.

I remember trying to help my children one day with a jig-saw puzzle. It seemed a confused puzzle of jagged pieces, for we had lost the sheet enclosed in the box which gave the completed picture. For long we could not get a start until we found that the picture was supposed to be the photograph of the King. That helped, and it was then that we realized that this piece and that piece fell into their place. So, long ago, the writer to the Hebrews puzzled over the enigma of life. He was confused by its mystery. Then light dawned, and he wrote, 'We see Jesus.' Seeing Him, many of the jagged pieces fell into place. How was that so? Because now this man knew that God was not lolling at His ease, out in the sunshine, away from the fogs, the storms, and the frosts of life. God was with His people, in the very centre of things, working, helping, comforting. This man was sure that when we are called to face pain or sacrifice, we are not called to face them alone, there are two of us in the task, and the other is God. So because of this he could rejoice in to-day's happiness, unafraid of what might come. He could bear to-morrow's frown, he could wait for the storms to pass.

'Shew me thy glory' is a great, a deep prayer. And it is always answered. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,' said Jesus. Looking at Jesus we know what God is like. We know that the ordering of human life rests in hands that were pierced for you and me. Looking at Jesus we see Him ceaselessly giving Himself for men and women He has never seen before; and God is like that, we can reason. He too has hands that are stretched out to touch the unhappy and the ill. He is the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep by name, and ever leads them out to fresh pastures. To know these things, to be quite sure of them, is the simple need, as it is the absolute necessity of every life.

*Knowledge of Ourselves.*

The second prayer is uttered for us by Job, 'Make me to know my transgression and my sin.'

We must know ourselves, the best as well as the worst within us, if ever we are to be masters of ourselves, if ever we are to achieve the good life. The fact is that there are all sorts of things coiled up within each of us, ugly things, full of venom, deadly. And we are not safe until we have absolute mastery over them. The only way in which my personal life can be disciplined, so that the evil things are subdued and the good things multiplied, is for me to come within the candid friendship and the power of Christ. He will be wounded by the unworthiness He sees within me, but He alone has the power to conquer the worst and reinforce the good.

'Shew me myself' that is Job's prayer in essence. We must learn to know ourselves, and so accept ourselves as a task, a task which can be carried through with Christ's help. We must accept ourselves as a task, very much as a farmer might accept a difficult field, with hard clayey soil, as something out of which he can at last win good results. We are here in this world to become good men and women, and to become that there is one thing needful—that we should ask God for the vision of what we are and what we might be.

*Learning to do God's Will.*

The third prayer follows naturally, and it is offered for us by the Psalmist, 'Teach me to do thy will.'

Alone, we are powerless to become better than we are. But there is One who can aid us; One who can teach us to do His will; One who can give us power, power to be true in thought, word, and deed to all that is best within us; One who can set us on the straight road; One who can deliver us from the tyranny of moods; One who is a great character builder.

Dame Laura Knight says in her autobiography,

'I am blind. I would see. I am deaf. I would hear. I am a little child. I would know.' Blindness, deafness, ignorance! These are practically beyond human skill to cure, but they are not past God's skill. He teaches us to see, to hear, to know. 'Teach me . . .' You and I have been blind to many an offered chance of love and service. Jesus teaches us to see. We have been deaf to the never silent voice of God urging us on. He makes us hear. We have been ignorant of the value of our prayers, of the worth of service and loyalty, of our responsibility towards others. He makes us know these things fully. He teaches us His will.

The mischief with so many of us is that we are living on too small a scale. We were made for big things, and we have been content with small things. When Michaelangelo was tutor to Raphael he scrawled across some of Raphael's early drawings the words 'Larger! Larger!' The drawings were too cramped and narrow, they did not give scope to the painter's genius. 'Larger' is the word that should be written over our lives. It is Christ who can teach us to leave the small and seek the great.

Let us go humbly to Him, to be taught about God's will. And if we do, we shall make no complaints of His adequacy as a teacher. One thing He desires of us, as Matthew Arnold has expressed it:

Children of men! not that your age excel
In pride of life the ages of your sires,
But that ye think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,
The Friend of man desires.

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THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

## Our Fighting Faith.

BY THE REVEREND ROY MCVICAR, M.A.,
CAIRNEYHILL, DUNFERMLINE.

'For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation.'—Ro $1^{16}$.

Not many Christians look on their faith as a fighting faith. Few people, looking at the world to-day, feeling justified pride in the achievements of its science and yet overwhelmed by the tremendous powers which it has put at the disposal of man to be used in his armies and institutions—few feel that their Christian faith is so relevant in this world that they can shout abroad their allegiance to it. Rather, by contrast, Christianity seems to be somewhat negligible and feeble.

Looking at the urgent tasks confronting mankind to-day: securing world-peace, universalizing a liberal education, providing decent houses and decent jobs, outlawing race and class warfare, these tasks seem to demand rolling up our sleeves and using our intelligence, while Christianity seems to belong to a different sphere. Few see clearly that Christian motives and principles and resources are indispensable to the world's salvation.

See, then, how Paul tackled such a situation. He wanted eagerly to go to Rome, proud city of imperial Cæsar. A man must be bold indeed who would go to Rome and say to its people: 'I have something more worth your allegiance than empire and armies and wealth and grandeur and learning.' Yet that was Paul's claim. 'Hence,' he wrote, 'my eagerness to preach the gospel to you in Rome also, for I am proud of the gospel of Christ.' We need this militant, challenging note in Christianity to-day, the spirit that dares to throw down the gauntlet to the world's power and greatness.

I want to celebrate those elements in the Christian gospel which merit our boasting in them.

For one thing, the Christian need not be ashamed of his gospel for in the eyes of God *all men are equal*. Worldly greatness counts for little. The Christian gospel is not overwhelmed by any list of a man's great position or fame or wealth or achievement or talent, for it goes below all the surface differences between people, and sees that at heart all men are alike in their deepest needs and desires, their aspirations and hopes, their temptations and failures. It was this levelling up of men that angered many at Christ. To Him a poor woman drawing water at a well was as important as the proud Pharisee. And, as for His attitude to wealth, when He saw a poor widow cast two farthings into the offering at the Temple alongside the lavish gifts of the wealthy, He said: 'This woman hath cast in more than them all, for in her poverty she has cast in all that she hath.' So Christ's faith is one of which we need never be ashamed, for, from the standpoint of the eternal, the things of the world take on a very different appearance, and are, often, as nothing compared to the deep things of the spirit for which the gospel stands.

Indeed, this levelling up is true of all life's greatest experiences. Is great music any better because it is played in a king's palace and not in a backyard? Is a great picture more wonderful when hung on the walls of a millionaire's mansion than when it stood in a corner of the artist's humble garret? And human love—is not that the same for man and woman whatever their station in life? Read such a masterpiece as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and we know with a heartfelt certainty that such great realities of life belong to us as people, and are independent of the chances and fortunes of life in this world. So in man's dealings with God. The poorest and humblest person may enter the secret place of prayer and meet the Father who seeth in secret. And the highest and most exalted personage in history can enter that same place only by the same way of humility and penitence and recognition of unworthiness.

But the Christian gospel goes further. It sets up an authority higher than the world's highest. It claims *obedience to God rather than to men*. No one knew that better than Paul. For conscience sake he stood against the world's mightiest men, and went to his death unconquered. To obey God has always meant opposition from the world, from the time when Christ took the Cross and challenged the evil of men from it. And in all ages men and women have gladly accepted that same Cross for the sake of being true to their Master. We need never be ashamed of such an uncompromising loyalty of conscience.

In the world to-day we have rather to be ashamed that the Christian gospel has lost something of its courage and strength of purpose and determination. Too often the Church has opposed rather than welcomed new truth: it has been reactionary rather than crusading: it has condoned the evils of the nation rather than condemned them: it has been timid and tactful in its utterance rather than outspoken for truth and righteousness. Of such things we deeply need to be ashamed.

In a world organized on a selfish basis the Christian needs that note of brave, unflinching loyalty. There are many things in personal, social, and national life which we cannot condone. Indeed, the Christian must get beyond this negative attitude and say: There are many things that we must go out and challenge and conquer, for we can stop short of nothing less than having the whole of life guided and permeated by the spirit and values of Christ. To stop short of that is disloyalty.

Now, come further and see how the Apostle is proud to take his gospel to Rome not only because it equalizes all men in the sight of God, and because it puts obedience to God before obedience to man, but also because it gives man power over forces of evil which normally are too strong for him.

No experience in life is more devastating than that in which a man realizes that he is *up against forces in his own make-up which he cannot master.* The poet's dream of the unconquerable man who is the captain of his fate and master of his soul is just a dream. The realistic truth is in the words of the Psalmist: 'My sins are stronger than I am.' This, too, Paul well knew for himself. In this same letter he paints a vivid picture of his futile fight with himself to achieve his ideals—'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?' But the fight did not end there. When Christ laid hold on him, the tide of battle turned, and when he fought now in the might of the Strong Son of God, the cry changed: 'Thanks be unto God who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Little wonder that with such a gospel of the power of God unto salvation, Paul was proud to preach it anywhere. Little wonder that his whole being was vibrant with a passionate fervour to bring to men such a glorious liberation from sin's tyranny. Little wonder that his message flamed across a sin-weary world like a prairie fire.

Nor is there any need greater to-day than for such power to overcome. Human sin has always been loathsome, but never more so than in this age when science has put at its disposal powers fit only for gods. Hatred has always been destructive, but to-day it is able to kindle a blaze of world-war and accomplish the extermination of two and a half million Jews. Fear has always enslaved men, but to-day it has been used to dominate the lives and actions and thoughts of whole nations. Greed has always been ruthless, but to-day it can deprive millions of work and food and houses to fill the pockets of the few. Yes, evil forces have always been too strong for men, but now more than ever.

If we who are Christ's know the victory God gives, how can we be silent or shy or apologetic? Paul would find it hard to understand such apathy and lifeless witness as we so often show. Such a gospel and such a challenge he knew asked a great deal from people. But he believed that people had it in them to respond. It cost something in those days to take the name of Christ, often cost these ordinary people torture, crucifixion, being thrown to the lions. But that could not daunt them. A young lad was passing into the arena to be eaten by lions for the perverted amusement of Roman society. As he passed the door, a soldier sneered, 'And where is your carpenter's Son now?' Quick as a flash came the dauntless reply, 'Making a coffin for your emperor.'

I do not believe that that heroic spirit is dead in people. I believe that the Hero Christ, if He gets the chance, still captures men, by the sheer daring of His demands upon them. For His demand is all or nothing. His command is complete obedience. And the hero in the heart of every man still answers: 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

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SEPTUAGESIMA.

## Is Our Christianity Appealing to our Softness or our Strength?

'Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' —2 Ti $2^3$.

We face to-day a question which, before we are through, ought to come home to our consciences —Is our Christianity appealing to our softness or our strength? For Christianity as it actually operates in experience appeals to and brings out all sorts of qualities in the people whom it touches. It brings out one man's intolerance and sectarianism so that, holding that one special church or one special set of theological opinions alone is true, he, who in other realms of life is benign and amiable, becomes in his Christianity dogmatic and bitter. It brings out another man's credulity so that he, who in other fields exhibits intelligence and hard-headedness, counts it a virtue in his Christianity to throw down the safeguards of evidence and believe almost any incredible thing which the Christian tradition happens to have picked up.

We can interpret the personality of Jesus until only His sweetness and gentleness fill up the picture. Recall Renan's idea of Jesus. 'Tenderness of heart,' he wrote, 'was in Him transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm.' In that soft portraiture where do we find the lineaments of Him who endured His cross on Calvary?

We can interpret prayer so that that deep resource, from which men like Paul drew their courage to face the wrath of devils and the scorn of men, becomes merely a spiritual lotus land, a place of soft, æsthetic retreat.

We can even interpret forgiveness of sin so that

in the end it makes God seem merely merciful, pardon very easy, punishment quite unreal, the law-abiding nature of the moral world exceedingly vague, and the whole, deep difference between right and wrong as soft as mush.

Christianity thus can be set forth so that it appeals to and brings out our softness.

Certainly, when we stop talking about Christianity in the abstract and begin thinking about the historic Jesus, there is no question—is there?—about the qualities in us to which He would appeal. On what powers in those first disciples did He get His fingers that they so went out to turn the world upside down, though like Peter they were crucified head downward, or like Paul decapitated on the Ostian Way? He did not bring out men's softness, only their strength.

If, now, someone says, He did comfort people too, we answer, Indeed He did. He poured out friendliness without stint. He could be as tender as a mother. He could say, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'; in Tennyson's fine phrase, He had

> that gentleness,
> Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man.

But, when we consider the nature of the comfort which He gave to those first disciples, there is no mistaking its quality. 'The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock'—that is comfort. Security, peace, stability, adequacy for life—that is great comfort—'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord!' But it is not soft.

To what qualities of strength in us, then, let us ask ourselves, would Jesus appeal if He had a chance?

For one thing, He would appeal to an unconsenting conscience. He had it Himself and He brought it out in anybody He seriously influenced. Why did He preach that first sermon in Nazareth against racial prejudice until the synagogue's service broke up in turmoil and they tried to kill Him? He had an unconsenting conscience. Why did He run into such headlong collision with the popular religion of His day or try single-handed to cleanse the Temple of its commercialism? He had an unconsenting conscience. Why the Cross? Oh, my soul, His unconsenting conscience. He had it Himself, He always challenged it in other people, and, when one sees it anywhere, it reminds one of Christ.

Christianity can be interpreted so as to call out softness, but Christ never did that.

Again, Christ would surely try to lay His hand upon another element of strength in us. We mean the capacity to be possessed by something worth serving. Bishop Brent of the Episcopal Church, whom many of us knew and loved, said once of the cause of Christian unity, which absorbed him, 'It is not so much that I possess it as that it possesses me.' Michelangelo as a little boy was possessed by the love of painting. His father was enraged; he was willing that peasants should be artists, but not the sons of his house. When he was a small lad his father and uncles used to take turns beating him to make him give up his desire to be an artist, but Michelangelo was possessed so that, as a boy of thirteen, despite the opposition, he stepped out into the studio of Ghirlandaio.

To be sure, some of us say That lets me out; I am no Michelangelo or Paul; I am a plain man in the common ways of life. A few years ago off the coast of New England a liner was wrecked on a reef. The Coast Guard went to the rescue under the captaincy of an old seaman but with some young men in the crew. One of the young men, seeing the situation presented to them, turned a white face to the captain. 'Sir,' he said, 'the wind is offshore and the tide is running out. Of course we can go out, but what good will it do? Against the wind and the tide we cannot come back.' And all the captain said was, 'Launch the boat. We have to go out. We don't have to come back.' That seaman, possessed by his duty, was a plain man.

We do not suppose—do we?—that we can get through life without being possessed by something. It is psychologically impossible. One man is driven by sensuality, ridden like a jaded horse flogged by a brutal rider. Another is possessed by the love of money so that no member of a chain gang is a more helpless prisoner. Another is possessed by love of ease, until softness rots his very soul away. And another is possessed by high aims, great faiths, serviceable causes, becoming their disciplined and able servant.

We are certain to be taken hold of by something or other before we are through with life. Be sure of that. The question is, Have we let Christianity take hold on this capacity in us?

To those who say Christianity appeals to softness, the weak need it, strong men do not, we answer, Since when has Christianity appealed to softness? Was Paul soft? Were Augustine and Martin Luther and Hugh Latimer soft? Were the great pioneers and missionaries of the faith, from David Livingstone to Wilfred Grenfell, or social reformers like Shaftesbury, soft? Say what else you will about Christianity, yet when you know its history, the sacrifices that it has inspired, the far-flung battle line it holds to-day across the world, the men whom Christ has really mastered and made His martyrs and pioneers, the thing you cannot say is that it appeals to softness. At its best it has appealed, as it did at first, to the spirit of adventure.

That is true, but the question is, Is it doing that in us? We hear continually that there is a conflict between science and religion, and it is almost always stated in intellectual terms. But is it not more true to say that the real conflict between science and religion is in another realm altogether? Science appeals to the adventurous spirit in youth. New things to be learned, new achievements to be wrought out, a new kind of world to be built—so youth hears science speaking. But religion often sounds to youth as if it were singing a soothing lullaby. Yet there never was more need of a

Christianity on fire with the passion of that first Church for the better world.

Doubtless, in spite of oneself, a sermon like this sounds dour and demanding, and yet, while we have been talking against softness and have been trying to reconstruct in our imagination the splendour of that early Church enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ, we really have been appealing for our own happiness. The courage of an unconsenting conscience, the glory of a life possessed by things worth serving, the spirit of adventure for a better day—that is the highroad to the most durable satisfaction in human life. God speed us on it! God bring us to the end of it with joy, saying, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.' [1]

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SEXAGESIMA.

## Forward.

BY THE REVEREND RODERICK BETHUNE, M.A., ABERDEEN.

'And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.'—Ex $14^{15}$.

There may be some upon whose ears these words fall somewhat strangely. Mindful of the many Scriptural invitations to make one's burdens known to God, it may seem odd to such that Moses, the spokesman of a people recently delivered from bondage and in danger of being recaptured by their erstwhile overlords, should be thus rebuked for turning to God in the extremity in which He found Himself. What do the words addressed to Moses signify?

1. First, I think He desired the Israelites to know that if there were some things He alone could do for them there were other things they must do for themselves. It is a lesson which must be learned by every generation and by every man and woman. In A. E. W. Mason's *Life of Francis Drake*, that great sailor to whom Britain owes so much, we are told that, homeward bound with a cargo of gold and other precious things, the *Golden Hind*, the ship on which Drake voyaged round the world, ran upon a reef and stuck fast. Many of the crew, feeling that there was nothing they could do to save themselves, commended their souls to God and waited for the end. Not so Drake. 'This,' says his biographer, 'was just the situation to show Drake at his full stature and to explain the adoration for him of his crew. Of the grief and disappointment which beset him he betrayed no sign. Five minutes ago he was rich, was sure of the enjoyment of high fame, and saw with his expectant eyes the doors opening upon a world of great affairs, and the Queen's favour. Now all that was lost, and besides, death stood at his elbow. But he went amongst his crew, led them in their prayers, made them comforting speeches, and then, whilst assuring them that their first thought must be of their immortal souls, still bade them not tempt God by leaving untried those means for their earthly salvation which He had provided. The pumps, for instance.'

If Drake's line of approach to his particular difficulty had not been followed in respect of other difficulties, our common life must have been vastly less secure than it is. It would have been easy for Ronald Ross, for example, appalled by the malaria scourge, to sit with folded hands requesting some kind of miraculous intervention from on high. But Ronald Ross set to work with the gifts with which God had endowed him until his patience and research were rewarded by the discovery destined to save the lives of multitudes.

2. But to return to that host of men and women who were unnerved by the appearance of Pharaoh and his men, there was a second lesson they must learn. They must learn to trust Him who, by a pillar of cloud by day and by a pillar of fire by night, had led them hitherto. Had they been given any reason for thinking that, face to face with this unusual difficulty, His grace and power would fail? Instead of making long prayers, let them advance and see if God would not justify their faith.

Don't let us be too hard upon the Israelites. Don't let us simply profess astonishment that, having experienced so much of God's mercy, their faith flickered and threatened to go out. There have been moments in most of our lives when we have faced difficulties unlike others we have dealt with in our time and when the unusual nature of them has caused us to grow as nervous as children. 'Speak unto the children of Israel,' said God, 'that they go forward.' What He desired of them, what He deserved from them, was their trust. Let them manfully tackle this difficulty, trusting in His strength, and see if He would not abundantly justify the venture. It is what He sometimes asks of us—that, instead of standing stock still in face of difficulties, we should tackle them, trusting in His mercy.

And ought we not, having experienced His mercy, to give Him our trust? The late Dr. Smellie, who adorned the ministry of the Original Secession Church for so many years and whose name is held in honour wherever his voice was heard and his books are known, has a passage in one of his volumes to which, when facing new difficulties, many have frequently turned and never once in vain. 'On the American prairies,' he wrote, 'the butterflies start westward in their migrations, and make steady progress, though the wind is against them and the sea in front. The delicate butterflies,' he continues, 'rebuke me. I must infuse a more resolute purpose and a more vigorous decision into my religion. I must learn to say, I will trust.'

3. But to return to the Israelites who took Moses to task for bringing them out of Egypt under false pretences, there was another lesson they had need to learn. Before they could enter the land of Canaan they must be fit subjects for such a land. The difficulties whose presence they so resented were part of their training. For that reason, God did not remove them. What He was

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *The Hope of the World*, 108.

prepared to undertake was to grant strength to each to surmount them.

It is an attitude to our difficulties which some of us have need to cultivate. As it is, many of us resent their presence and profess to see little purpose in them, only an indication that God's love for us is less than we had been led to believe. They spoil our pleasure. They prevent us from knowing constant contentment. But what if this world was never intended to be a pleasure-ground? What if the goal of life is not contentment but character? It is said of Jesus, is it not, that He, though a son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And, if Jesus, why not us?

A full and satisfying answer to the problem of suffering is not possible, I admit, this side of the grave, yet I find it hard to subscribe to the view held by some that it is totally inexplicable, a meaningless and purposeless defect in God's otherwise fair creation. Whether it is His will that many of our brethren should suffer as they are sometimes called to do, I am not prepared to say, but this I will say, that some, believing that God has some purpose for everything in His universe, have come forth from suffering tried as pure gold and with a character of a finer quality than they possess who have known nothing of their hardships. As He had a purpose for Israel—how else can we explain the fact that it took forty years to cover a distance of two hundred miles?—is it not probable that He has a purpose for us, a purpose which, in its fulness, can be realized, not as difficulties are removed, but as they are endured and, if possible, surmounted?

Personally, I know of no other faith which is capable of sustaining us in face of many of the arduous experiences which befall us—the faith, that is to say, that God says to us, as He said to the ancient Israelities, 'Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward,' not because He has less interest in us than we were led to believe, but because there is a character He desires us to attain, a goal He desires us to reach, and a destiny He is anxious we should fulfil. Could we rise to such a faith, how different we should feel in respect of burdens we have been called to bear and battles we have been called to fight. With a will, because we are persuaded that they are not entirely without meaning, we should bend our shoulders to the burden and brace ourselves for the battle, putting everything we possess into the effort.

These three necessary lessons which, I am sure, it was God's desire that the Israelites should learn have need to be learned by all of us as we stand at the beginning of another year. God knows there are difficulties before which many of us quail and from the necessity of facing which many of us would gladly be freed. All, we may be feeling, we can do is to commend ourselves continually to God's mercy and hope that He may by some miraculous intervention make the rough places plain. But what if His response to our prayers is precisely His response to the prayer which Moses uttered long ago—that instead of crying unto Him we should go forward, that we should do something to help ourselves, that we should tackle our difficulties, trusting in His mercy, and that we should endure and, if possible, surmount our difficulties in the belief that they are not entirely without meaning and purpose. Whether at the moment we feel equal to fulfilling such a behest, it is worth bearing in mind that as the Israelites went forward at God's express command they found that His power did not fail when the evil day came. And if it did not fail in their case, is there any reason for believing that, as we advance, it will fail in ours?

# Conversion and Evangelism.[1]

By the Reverend W. H. Way, R.A.F. Chaplain.

'None of us can win anyone else to Christ—the Holy Spirit alone can do that through the Body of Christ, that is, in and through us who are members of that Body: and this He can only do through our free co-operation with God's appointed means of Prayer and Sacrament, and Fellowship with Him, and through Him with one another.'

This sentence from the New Year letter of Dr. Furse, Bishop of Saint Alban's, came to hand after this paper was written, but so clearly sums up what the writer wished to say that he asks permission to quote it and borrow its authority.

Conversion appears to be of three kinds, all leading to a state that is not realized in this world except in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man; that is, to a state of perfect obedience to God and of fellowship with Him.

The three kinds are associated with an arbitrary threefold division of man's nature into Mind, Will, and Emotion; for purposes of study this division may be maintained, but in man himself there is a unity that may not be divided. Acknowledging that it is the whole undivided personality of man that moves towards greater obedience, yet it does appear that an advance along one of these complementary paths may be made separately for a time. This may be illustrated from experience: a man may be taught at home or at school the fundamental necessity of mental honesty, yet not have it related to any idea of God or to any desire

[1] A Paper read before the Royal Air Force chaplains stationed in an area of the Middle East Command.

to obey Jesus Christ; in so far as he is not hindered by selfish desires or emotional prejudices he will obey God involuntarily in such things as are set before him, and if the right ideas and opportunities are set before him he will ultimately come to see God and want to obey Him. This is intellectual conversion along the path of obedience. Similarly there are many who are strongly disciplined in their childhood to exercise control of themselves through the will-power, and are taught that it is their duty to obey God 'though He slay.' This strong sense of duty persists and increases with enlightenment and the delight of worship and service, until at last mere obstinacy dies in the birth of faith and love. And thirdly there are those whose whole emotional atmosphere is soaked in religion and its observances. Their devotion may grow in almost complete separation from increasing enlightenment in its true nature, and little influenced by the will; but if it is fastened upon Jesus Christ and not diverted to secondary objects of devotion it may become an obedience even more whole-hearted than that in which the mind or will predominates.

True and complete obedience and fellowship with God depend therefore upon three things; a right knowledge of God, a right sentiment about Him, and a will to obey. Advance towards these may occur separately or concurrently, and varies with each man and woman and child. And if any one of them is defective the obedience is imperfect. It is not difficult to find examples of such imperfection.

A mistaken knowledge of God, both in His nature and purpose, is observed by the Christian in all the major and minor religions; in the primitive religion of the savage, and in the most up-to-date efforts of the advanced American. It is implicit in the philosophies of many erudite scientists, and in the propaganda of the most scrupulous politicians. It is explicit in the writings of novelist and journalist, and implicit in the manner of life of the majority of citizens of every country in the world. It would be an insult to the reader to waste time in quoting particular instances of what is so obvious to him and well known.

The mistaken sentiment is largely encouraged by public opinion, which will follow in these days any spectacular novelty, and is still trailing after the de-bunkers of religion and the prophets of humanism. God is thought to be non-existent, or at least not important. Consequently the public imagination is only stirred when He is used by the secular authority and given glamour to evoke a response that will help on, for instance, the war effort. This is no new phenomenon, nor was there ever a time when popular sentiment surrounded a really true presentation of God as He really is: the popular idea of God is almost always wrong in some respect. Not only that, but the sentiments of the majority are usually directed towards secondary objects like the home, the future, comfort, the nation, the party, the pub, and so forth. These sentiments of course are good in their place, but not as substitute for the God who gives them all: and they are usually sentimental. By that is meant that the imagination presents a highly coloured picture of the ideal with which men associate themselves, which conceals the fact that the reality would hardly draw forth any response at all. The thoughts about home of men who are serving overseas; the tears of relatives at the graveside; the hopes of democrat, communist, and fascist; all these can provide examples of pure sentimentality.

The lack of will to obey the Heavenly Vision may be illustrated by those whose will has been destroyed by discouragement in their childhood, and perhaps also by those delightful types who so graciously patronise the Almighty. They say, 'Oh yes, Padre, I am all in favour of religion . . .' and curiously enough they are! And often when their knowledge is tested they are found to have a pretty good idea of what Christianity teaches. But there is a curious hindrance in the will to obey. The hindrance does not always lie in the will, in fact not very often; but it is there that it appears to reside.

Conversion then is of a threefold kind; it consists of the enlightening of the mind—to see the joy of fellowship with God—that the will may be strengthened to obey Him.

Passing from the theory of conversion to what happens in practice, one finds another division of the human personality revealed in the experience of conversion; the division between conscious and unconscious, or subconscious. In the life of Jesus Christ we are to presume that the mind, the will, and the affections all developed in harmony, and He triumphed over dishonesty of thought, selfishness of will, and a self-regarding imagination, in such a way that He was not led into error, wilfulness, or idolatry. Consequently, His sub-conscious life did not conflict with His conscious life, and He simply grew in grace and in favour with God and man. But in other men (for He was truly man), the growth in obedience is hindered; and nearly always the conflict between what a man knows he should do and what, hampered by original sin and beset by temptations to actual sin, he finds himself actually doing is unresolved and thrust out of mind to fester in the subconscious. There are degrees in the extent to which people repress their conscience and deceive themselves that they are happy. At

the one end of the scale are the saints; by which is meant those who keep close to Jesus Christ in worship and prayer and the Christian fellowship, and know the good; and who by the help of the Spirit are enabled more and more to choose that good for themselves, and so become saints in the popular sense of the word. With the saints the conflict often ends in defeat; but God gives the grace of humility to acknowledge defeat, and forgiveness is sought and so not very much damage is done. The tension between what ought to be, and what is, remains as an aid to humility and the seeking the help of God in Christ; which is just what God wants of men. At the other end of the scale are those who are unable to accept defeat, or who will not face the conflict, and repress the very idea of it. But the conflict is a real thing and continues whether they like it or not. It continues unconsciously. Sometimes these poor things develop an excessive devotion to the externals of religion and become fanatics of one kind or another; sometimes the conflict becomes personalized and they develop a split personality, where the good and evil do not war so much as have an alternate existence. These unhappy people become mentally deranged and as schizophrenics are cared for in neuropathic hospitals. But in happier case, probably through the love and prayers of a relative or friend, God is able to build up the good in their conscious minds which strengthens the good that lies buried; until at last that buried good achieves a triumph in the conflict, and the man or woman suffers a spectacular conversion with all sorts of interesting incidental phenomena. And he is very glad to tell everybody about it.

Between these two extremes, of the quiet growth in grace and the hidden conflict which springs to light in its moments of triumph, lies the majority of the human race. In happy circumstances they face most issues and try to be good, honest, and zealous; sometimes they refuse to face the issue and think they have finished with it by putting it out of mind; sometimes, of course, they face the issue and decide that it is much more fun to be an exciting bad boy than a dull good boy.

Evangelism consists in showing a man that it is more exciting to be good than bad; that peace of mind comes by not shirking issues, but by choosing the right—even though it leads to death; and by showing what is that good and perfect will of God who is Love Himself.

It is always through the grace of God the Holy Ghost that a man is turned to love and obedience: but that grace works through imagination, reason, and example. It is in worship that the imagination is stirred, and the beauty and holiness of God revealed; it is in the revelation of Christ and a study of the word of God that a man knows what to believe; it is in the fellowship of the Body of Christ that he receives and practises Christian love.

Men born to be children of God are brought up in three kinds of homes. In the Christian family he will be taught not to shirk the issues or choose the evil, but with the help of his parents and teachers will be converted into a grown-up Christian: an event crowned by Confirmation. Even should he of his wilfulness choose the wrong, yet the knowledge of Christ will be there, and an unconscious comparison of his own manner of life with that of Jesus Christ will very likely enable him through the prayers of others to 'come to himself.' Very many contemporaries have come home in this manner.

Where the parents are strongly prejudiced against what is most often a very false idea of God, they will very often hate the Church of Christ and affect to despise God. The child will be denied access to the Christian verities and manner of life, and it will be only as he picks up crumbs of truth about God and the Christian life that he has any hope of becoming obedient and entering the Kingdom of God. He very often is brought up by his parents to be intellectually honest, and receiving their prejudices only at second-hand may suffer an intellectual conversion as he receives enlightenment. If, on the other hand, he receives also a strong dose of the prejudice, then the battle may take place subconsciously and the conversion will go off with a bang.

It is in the homes of the indifferent that a man is given the worst start on the road of life. In him the imagination has to be stirred, the powers of reason aroused, and the will shocked, before anything positive in the way of directing can be done. A man walking or running can be guided and directed: a man sitting or sleeping first has to be roused. These sleepers very often become psychopathic in a mild way and suffer from neurosis. The psychopathic destroys himself before God: the neurotic just dies where he lies.

It may here be profitable to use a fairly exact analogy of conversion, both in the conscious and in the subconscious, taken from inorganic nature.

Surrounding the earth there is a magnetic field, running roughly north and south. All inanimate things lie in this field, and there is a tendency in the molecules of a bar of iron to align themselves with this environment. Where the tendency succeeds you have a magnet which rapidly swings back into the field whenever circumstances permit, and which may be strong enough to overcome hindrances to such obedience through the power induced in it by the magnetic field. The majority of pieces of iron have their molecules roughly

aligned, and under favourable circumstances obey the magnetic field: and the longer the iron remains in the proper alignment the more capable it becomes of responding to its influence; further, if the iron is subjected to the shock of hammering while in this position, the movement of the molecules to obedience will be accelerated. After an unmagnetized bar of iron has been subjected to all the many influences with which it comes into contact during the time of its existence as a bar on its own, it will be found to have developed local poles within itself to which the molecules will turn. After this has happened the natural tendency to obey the environmental field will be destroyed and considerable force will have to be applied to co-ordinate the molecules into that unity which will enable it to obey, and will also enhance the strength of its internal structure. The dissolution of the internal centres of attraction will probably largely go on unobserved from without, until one day the iron is suddenly seen to swing into obedience and act like a true compass. This process may be hastened or suddenly brought about by the application of some casual (or perhaps not unpremeditated) shock.

So the Christian is truly obedient to the God whose beneficent power surrounds him, and accepts the shocks and troubles of life as aids to his obedience; the ordinary man is indifferent, but often obedient until he finds interests in his own life in this world which divert his powers from true obedience; but the ordinary man by the power of the Holy Spirit and the help of others may be converted from this unsatisfactory state, either gently or suddenly, obviously or secretly, to a happy obedience in the family of Christ's flock, being unable longer to resist the grace of God.

It will thus be seen that conversion is not something that any man can produce in any other man in five minutes: it is the grace of God working through his whole life, and aided by any obedient Christian or even an obedient non-Christian who happens to be handy at the moment. The evangelist is used by the Holy Ghost for one of three purposes: to start a man on a new development of his life; to provide an environment in which he can grow for a time; or to say the casual word or perform the casual deed which will trip the mechanism that has been carefully built up by the Holy Ghost over many years. 'Casually' is used advisedly, because both experience and the studies of the psychologists have shown that it is not the eloquent sermon of Sunday evening, so much as something said quite off-handedly when a parson is talking of something else that sets a man off. As psychologists have also shown that it is possible to be converted from a conception of Christianity to a rival religion, it is well to beware that in casual conversations the welfare of the listener is in mind.

If this interpretation of the nature and experience of conversion is accurate, then the corresponding view of evangelism must similarly be very wide. Strictly, and by dictionary definition, it means preaching the gospel: which is a wide enough idea. A narrow conception of conversion makes the gospel poverty-stricken, and destroys any expectation that it will work in the clergy when they have settled down to the comfortable life of a country parson, a converted don, or an urban ecclesiastical magnate; or in the laity in corresponding temptations to complacency. But conversion broadly conceived can take place through the whole of life and in its every sphere of thought and action.

Of the evangelist himself, by this interpretation, two things are required; an obedience of his own life to God, and a sensitiveness to the needs of other men. Obedience is obviously learnt chiefly through the discipline of the Church, which safeguards him from error, provides him with unambiguous opportunities to love as a Christian, and provides the fullness of the riches in Christ in such superabundance that he may never starve or find obedience too narrow. There he may learn to use his reason, his instincts, his imagination in responding to the love of God. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Obedience to the Holy Ghost can only be learnt by loving God: sensitiveness to the needs of men can only be learnt by loving one's neighbour. The motives of professional evangelists and high-powered converters do not always bear very close examination. There may lie hidden a desire to make people see the way he does; there may be a simple desire to add a scalp to his belt; there may be a desire to establish by numbers the effectiveness of his method, or the truth of his idea; sometimes mere ascendancy over others is desired; and too often the hidden motive is the establishment of the worship of a creature or an attribute of God, or the devotion of men to Him almost in the sense in which Saul was called upon to devote the Amalekites.

In the forefront of the mind of the evangelist must be a real consideration for the welfare of the other man, and only thus can he be sensitive to the true need of that other man in such a moment of contact. To go about wanting to convert men may produce success of a certain kind, but may only reveal a desire on the part of the evangelist to be successful: and if he is really an earnest and sincere man who has been led astray by others whose idea of conversion is narrow, or whose motives are really selfish even while they are

themselves deceived, then the poor man will find that the harder he tries to save people the less successful he will become and ultimately his own faith will be in peril. The world is full of man-converted men, and either they are almost unconvertible apostates or a nuisance to everybody: the Church on the other hand is full of men who have become obedient to Christ their Lord through the patient obedience and humble, sensitive love of common or garden Christians, such as the chaplain finds in his congregation Sunday by Sunday.

All this may seem to discredit the keen, enthusiastic 'twice-born,' whom the psychologists have found to make the most natural evangelistic leaders, and to excuse the parson from the evangelistic efforts that his conscience is always telling him he ought to be organizing: but not really. If the evangelist is obedient and sensitive his own experience does make him eminently suitable to preach the difference between wilfulness and obedience, and the free joys of the family life of God: and the clergy can never tell when the Holy Spirit is not waiting for him to respond to His prompting to do some magnificent work that may result in the conversion of a particular man in his parish whom the Holy Ghost can reach in no other way.

The net result should be to raise the ordinary life of the Church to the proper level of preaching the Good News of the New Life in Christ in all its manifold ways by precept and by example.

# Contributions and Comments.

## Acts xi. 29.

*τῶν δὲ μαθητῶν καθὼς εὐπορεῖτό τις ὥρισαν ἕκαστος αὐτῶν εἰς διακονίαν πέμψαι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀδελφοῖς.*

MOFFATT renders thus: 'So the disciples put aside money, as each of them was able to afford it, for a contribution to be sent to the brothers in Judæa.'

Perhaps this masterly paraphrase misses the point that here we have an instance of thoughtful as well as generous giving on the part of the Early Brotherhood. Also, is there so great a necessity to depart drastically from the text?

*τις* and *ἕκαστος αὐτῶν* at first glance appear to be tautological. But 'each' (*τις*, 'man for man') contributed as he himself had prospered. And further, 'every one of them' (*ἕκαστος αὐτῶν*) decided to 'earmark' the sum collected and forward it for the relief of the needy brethren settled in Judæa.

*ὥρισαν*, 1 aor of *ὁρίζω* is one of the aorists in this passage that demands special attention. This verb according to competent scholars means (*a*) to mark a boundary, (*b*) to determine, designate. I suggest that here a more exact rendering of *ὥρισαν* when taken with *εἰς διακονίαν* would be 'earmarked for the relief' *i.e.* conscientiously set aside (bringing out the idea of *ὅρος* implicit in *ὁρίζω*) according as each had prospered (done well) in his business to answer the call of distress from Judæa.

There is a sense of urgency in [1] *πέμψαι* worthy of note. 'We desire "to send" now, "to have sent" (to use our own common parlance, and we are dealing here with the language of the people), what each of the faithful has given out of a willing heart and up to his financial strength.' It was a unanimous, whole-hearted gift.

Consequently, to bring out the complete meaning, I venture to translate: 'Then the disciples, every one of them, just as each had the means, ear-marked it to send to the brethren resident in Judæa for their relief.'

THOMAS GILLIESON.

*Bonkyl and Preston, Berwickshire.*

[1] The aorist in Classical Greek is assuredly used to express in a special way momentary or single action. Here there is no feat of imagination in discerning a 'kindly impulsiveness' in *πέμψαι*, the instantaneousness of a practical sympathy.

## The 'Golden Calf.'

WRITING on 'Egypt and Israel' in *The Legacy of Egypt* (Oxford, 1942), Professor W. O. E. Oesterley suggests that the narrative of Exodus 32 should not be interpreted with reference to Canaanite bull-worship but accepted rather as a historical episode in which the religious symbolism is derived from Egypt. In this Professor Oesterley reverts to the view of earlier scholars; but he gives it a new application in this way:

> 'We hazard the suggestion that this deity was the goddess Hathor. There is a perfect image of this cow-goddess belonging to the time of Amenophis II. (*c.* 1460–1420); the head, neck, and horns were originally covered with gold; it is now in the Cairo Museum; this image is strongly suggestive of the "Golden Calf." She is described elsewhere as the goddess whose necklace shines "like heaven with its stars"; she is called "the golden one," or "the gold of the gods"; this, too, is suggestive as the reason why the "Calf" was called "golden." Figures of this goddess have also been found at Bethshean, Gezer, and Jericho; and the goddess Astarte is sometimes represented with the head-dress of Hathor.'

To this may be added the fact that the name of Hathor in the form 'Gold' was sometimes written with the sign for a cow; and that other expressions used of her were 'she who is radiant in the form of gold' and 'Gold, the mistress of Dendera' (see Erman-Grapow, *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, ii. 239).

Perhaps the most serious objection to this view is that the word used in the Hebrew narrative is not the feminine עֶגְלָה but the masculine עֵגֶל, rendered by the LXX μόσχος (cf. Ac $7^{41}$ καὶ ἐμοσχοποίησαν . . .) and better translated 'bull' rather than 'calf.' Egypt also had her sacred bulls, like Apis and Mnevis, but these were living bulls and not images. On the other hand, the Books of Kings in the LXX give δάμαλις 'heifer' for עֵגֶל, and this certainly reduces the force of the objection.

J. Gwyn Griffiths.

*Bala, Wales.*

# Entre Nous.

**Evelyn Underhill.**

An echo of Evelyn Underhill's voice reaches us in a collection of addresses which she gave at Pleshey during a Retreat there—*Light of Christ* (Longmans; 5s. net). The House of Retreat at Pleshey was a favourite resort of Miss Underhill. There she 'gave' many Retreats. It used to be known in the neighbourhood as 'The Holy Land,' because a Religious House had stood on it since the fourteenth century. Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, Regent of England, founded it as an act of thanksgiving for deliverance in a great storm at sea, and lavished rich gifts on it. The Community of the Servants of Christ built the present House as a Convent for themselves in 1907, though they have outgrown it. And there is an atmosphere about the spot, for prayer has gone up from it for hundreds of years.

Miss Lucy Menzies prefaces these addresses by a 'Memoir' which is not a memoir in the ordinary sense, but (probably a legitimate use of the word) is a recollection of some characteristics of her friend. What seems to have impressed every one who knew Miss Underhill was the combination of the mystic and the woman of the world. She was full of vitality, with a keen sense of humour and an interest in all kinds of human objects, and unhuman. She was a field naturalist and knew the birds and flowers of the countries she visited. She was an expert at handling a boat, having sailed her own boat from her youth up. It was these interests that counteracted the strain under which she lived.

The strain must have been considerable, for she spent much of her time as spiritual director to a large circle of disciples. This direction she exercised not only in Retreats such as those she conducted at Pleshey but through an extensive correspondence. Many of the letters contradict the prevalent conception of a mystic as one who lives entirely in the other realm. In one of them she wrote to a certain maiden that what she really wanted was a hot bath and a thriller!

But, indeed, she did live in that other realm. It was because there was something she got there that so many people were ready to come to her for help. They got the help, but they also found one who was very human, natural, and simple. And, large as her influence was over many, she remained humble and sincere. When some one spoke of the wonderful work she was doing for God, she said brusquely: '*Only* trying to be a decent third housemaid!'

**What is a Retreat?**

When a first 'retreatant' confessed to her husband that she intended to join a Retreat, he took his pipe out of his mouth and said: 'Go, my dear, go, by all means, you're just about due for a spot of re-birth.' Miss Underhill takes this quite seriously. 'That man,' she says, 'had a very clear idea of one function of a Retreat, its power of causing the re-birth of our spiritual sense, that which has grown dull and dead in us.' In these addresses, however, she uses another figure altogether—light. She takes her disciples into a great cathedral, like Chartres, and pictures the scene as the light of day pours through the windows. From outside, these windows seemed dull, grimy, unattractive. But *inside*, it is a very different matter. In a Retreat we get inside, and as we wander from window to window, and gaze, new aspects of the blessed reality reveal themselves to us. The Eternal Light comes to us through one and another aspect of the life and word and ministry of Christ. And so, as we stand gazing, she speaks to us in these addresses of the Incarnation, of the Teacher, the Healer, the Rescuer, Christ in the Sacraments and the Glorified Life. The key-word in all this is gazing. The first thing and the last is adoration, getting out of ourselves, fixing the eyes on something objective, that we may see ourselves the more clearly. The windows around us are the windows of His mystery.

F. J. Rae.

**The Church's Witness in Holland.**

The heroic stand made by the Reformed Church in Holland during the years of occupation deserved to be recorded, and this has been done in a short book by Dr. W. A. Visser 'T Hooft—*The Struggle of the Dutch Church for the Maintenance of the Commandments of God in the Life of the State* (S.C.M.; 2s. 6d. net). In this booklet the author gathers together, with an Introduction and explanations by himself, the Church documents

which tell the splendid story of the brave witness of leaders and members of the Church alike. These documents are precious, says the Editor, for those who composed them, and those also who read them from the pulpit, were in great danger and risked much when giving this witness.

The Church in Holland had a great past. But, in the years before the war, it had lost much of its vitality and vigour. Its renaissance came with the advent of war. Catastrophe achieved what man was unable to do. The history of the Dutch Church during these fateful years is the history of a Church which, after long years of slackness, 'has been seized by the hand of its Lord and has been allowed to feel again what it means to be a Church.'

To understand the documents in this book we must realize that the Nazis had two methods of dealing with a Christian Church. There was the direct method, incorporating the Church and making it a docile instrument of National Socialist propaganda and education. And there was the indirect method, cutting the Church off from every influence on public life and on education, saying to the Church: 'You have your spiritual task, go on carrying it out. Your work is spiritual, keep to your own province and leave all State matters to us. We will look after education and public affairs. You have nothing to do with these, why should you insist on invading the political field which is outside your commission?' This was a subtle and plausible plea, but it did not deceive the Dutch Church leaders, who replied in direct terms: 'The thought that the power of Jesus Christ is not relevant to certain spheres of life is a foolish heresy.' They saw clearly that the question at issue in the Dutch Church struggle was this: the maintenance of the laws of God in the life of the State and the people. Thus the struggle of the Church and the occupying powers is one which has all the characteristics of a conflict between two powers which, by their very nature, are unable ever to come to an understanding. In this conflict all sections of the Church were involved, the officials who had to carry out the Nazi orders, the ministers who had to read the protests of the leaders from their pulpits, and the members who loyally supported their pastors and leaders. The result of the brave and faithful witness which these men and women bore was the usual persecution, concentration camp and its horrors. One of the most terrible things disclosed in these pages is the determination of the Nazi authorities to sterilize the Jews in Holland. To this, as well as to the whole cruel policy pursued against the Jews, the Dutch Church made its solemn protest. And, indeed, through the whole of these horrible years the courage of the Dutch religious community never faltered. The documents ought to be read by all who value the witness of brave men. It should be added that the documents here included are memoranda, public declarations, letters, pastorals, confessions of faith directed to the authorities and in other cases to the worshipping congregations—arranged in chronological order.

**Humility.**

In the December number of *St. Martin's Review* the Rev. Ian White-Thomson, who was Chaplain to the Archbishop, gives what he calls 'simple impressions' of William Temple. 'The first, continuing and most lasting impression which I have is of a man who showed in unique degree the great Christian virtue of humility. I often heard the Archbishop say "Humility is not thinking little of oneself; it is not thinking of oneself at all"; and in this as in many other things he practised exactly what he preached. He did not think about himself at all. . . . Another impression of him was his unself-consciousness, which was all part of that humility of which I spoke at first. On one occasion he was travelling to Oxford with some Bishops, and was anxious to ensure that one of them who had not yet appeared should travel with him in order to discuss matters of business. The train was crowded, the platform more so, but I succeeded in spotting the particular Bishop as he passed the carriage. I told the Archbishop, who at once went to the window and roared the Christian name of the Bishop till the platform fairly rocked with the echo. It worked all right—could it do anything else?—and the Bishop, slightly shaken, made his way back to the carriage in which we were sitting.'

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**A Community.**

'The British Council of Churches' Report, *Home and Family Life*, speaking of the part played by the home in the education of the child, describes it as the first cell of truly social living—political, cultural and religious. This is a good description, but it fails to emphasize strongly enough its principal function to give us our first training in community life. Dr. Brunner speaks of the community of the family as "the ordering of the Divine Goodness in Creation, by means of which He gives us life, through which He gives us to each other, requires us to live for each other and thus educates us for a life in common." This is the fundamental thing, that whatever the child learns he is learning it and living it in a community. It is hardly too much to say that it was primarily in order to learn this lesson first, not by precept but by example, that God ordained that His children should grow up in families. Nor is this only true of the child, for this new community is closely linked with that which is at the heart of the Christian faith, "*communion*." Christianity asserts the communion of persons within the Godhead. One of the two great sacraments is that of "Holy Communion"; we look hopefully to our place in the "Communion of the Saints."'[1]

[1] Nell Jenkins, 'The Family in Society,' in *The Christian News-Letter*, Oct. 4, 1944.

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